CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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OIL hitches a Thar ride to beat geopolitics blues

When Hormuz blocked amid ragging Mideast war, India turns to Thar desert, ramps up crude output; marks a rise of around 70% from last year's 705 barrels per day

JAISALMER

In a major win for India's energy independence, state-run Oil India Ltd has achieved a major breakthrough by increasing crude oil production from Rajasthan's Thar desert amid rising global uncertainties related to the US-Israel-Iran war and volatile oil markets.

The company has recorded its highest-ever output from the Jodhpur sandstone formation, highlighting India's push to strengthen domestic energy capabilities.

Oil India Ltd has ramped up production to 1,202 barrels per day, a sharp rise compared to last year's 705 barrels per day, which is nearly a 70% jump.

The crude extracted from the Baghewala field in Jaisalmer is transported via tankers to Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) facilities in Mehsana, Gujarat. From there, it is routed through pipelines to the Koyali refinery operated by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), ensuring a streamlined supply chain.

The company's annual production figures also reflect this upward trajectory. During the financial year 2025-26, output reached 43,773 metric tonnes, up from 32,787 metric tonnes in the previous year, demonstrating consistent growth.

Advanced technology driving growth

A key factor behind this achievement is the adoption of modern extraction techniques as extracting oil from the Baghewala field in Jaisalmer is no easy feat. The company extensively used Cyclic Steam Stimulation (CSS), a thermal enhanced oil recovery method particularly effective for high-viscosity crude found in the region. By injecting steam into the wells to thin the oil, the company has turned a challenging geological site into a high-performing asset.

"This is a significant achievement, especially considering the challenging geological conditions of the Thar region. It underlines the potential of unconventional resources in contributing to India's energy needs," an official said.

The company has carried out CSS operations in 19 wells, around 72% more than the previous year, and drilled 13 new wells, compared to nine earlier. These efforts have played a crucial role in unlocking higher production levels.

INNOVATION UNLOCKS TOUGH RESERVES

The Baghewala oil field in the Bikaner-Nagaur sub-basin is one of India's few onshore heavy oil reserves. The crude there is 'heavy', means it is thick and sticky, which makes conventional methods ineffective. To deal with these challenges, Oil India introduced advanced technologies such as fishbone drilling, barefoot completion, electric downhole heaters, and hydraulic sucker rod pumps. Additionally, employing techniques like diluent injection and artificial lift systems to improve extraction efficiency. Since production began in 2017, the field, originally discovered in 1991 and spread across 200.26 square kilometres, has grown steadily. Out of 52 wells, 33 are currently operational, contributing to the rising output. The successful deployment of CSS technology, first tested in 2018, has proven to be a turning point. It has enabled large-scale extraction from previously difficult reserves and set new standards for thermal-enhanced oil recovery in India. This achievement is expected to play a vital role in reducing India's reliance on imported crude oil while enhancing long-term energy security.

FACTFILE

- Field discovered in 1991
- Spread across 200.26 SQ KM
- Production began in 2017
- Out of 52 wells, 33 are currently operational, contributing to rising output

Annual production

FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26
32,787 MT	43,773 MT

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE
Drilled 13 more wells this year and advanced 'fishbone drilling'—a technique used for the first time in India's heavy oil reserves—to reach more pockets of oil.

SUPPLY CHAIN
Once extracted, the crude is transported by tankers to Gujarat, where it eventually reaches Indian Oil's Koyali refinery to be processed into fuel.

'OPEN THE FU**ING STRAIT OR FACE HELL'

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Sunday escalated his rhetoric, vowing to unleash unprecedented attacks on Iranian energy infrastructure, declaring that Tuesday would be "power plant day and bridge day all wrapped in one" in Iran, and warning that there would be "nothing like it."

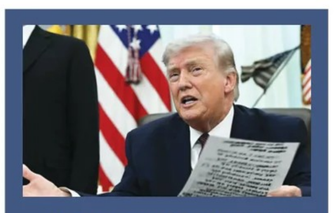
"Open the Fuckin' strait, you crazy bastards, or you'll be living in hell — just watch! Praise be to Allah," Trump wrote in a Truth Social post.

In his strongly-worded message to Iran, Trump used foul language and invoked the name of Allah, a highly uncharacteristic and unpresidential departure from the decorum traditionally expected of an American head of state and Commander-in-Chief.

The outburst came as Trump continues to pile pressure on Tehran to open the Strait of Hormuz, the strategically vital waterway through which a significant portion of the world's oil supply flows, and which has emerged as a major flashpoint in the escalating standoff between Washington and Tehran in recent weeks.

On Saturday, following a strike near an Iranian nuclear facility and the reported downing of a US aircraft, Trump took to Truth Social to renew his ultimatum. Referencing a previously issued 10-day window for negotiations, he warned that the final deadline was fast approaching. "Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT. Time is running out, 48 hours before all hell rains down on them. Glory be to God!, President DONALD J. TRUMP," he wrote.

Iran has effectively halted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz since the start of the war on February 28, triggered by a US-Israel bombing campaign against the Islamic Republic aimed at targeting top leadership, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and other senior IRGC officials.



'GOOD CHANCE OF IRAN DEAL MONDAY'

Trump said on Sunday that he believes there is a "good chance" of reaching a deal with Iran on Monday, ahead of his deadline for Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face unprecedented strikes on Iranian energy infrastructure. "I think there is a good chance tomorrow, they are negotiating now," Trump told a Fox News journalist. He renewed his warning, saying, "If they don't make a deal and fast, I'm considering blowing everything up and taking over the oil."

THE GREAT RESCUE'

How US pulled off 'miraculous' extraction of its airman from Iran

The US military have rescued a second airman of the downed F-15E fighter jet in an operation that is being hailed as the most "daring search and rescue operations in US history".

US President Donald Trump on Sunday gave information about the successful rescue operation conducted "deep inside the enemy territory".

"The United States Military pulled off one of the most daring Search and Rescue Operations in US History, for one of our incredible Crew Member Officers, who also happens to be a highly respected Colonel, and who I am thrilled to let you know is now SAFE and SOUND," Trump posted on Truth Social.

Let's take a look at how exactly the US managed to pull off the "miraculous operation" without incurring any losses, as claimed by President Trump.

After Iran shot down a two-seat US F-15E jet on Friday, one of the crew members was rescued after search-and-rescue efforts.

The other crew member who was left behind in treacherous mountains of Iran was being hunted down by the Iranian forces. Iran had also promised a reward for anyone who turned in the "enemy pilot."

At the same time, the US planned a rescue operation

while constantly monitoring the airman's location.

"...Commander in Chief, Secretary of War, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and fellow Warfighters were monitoring his location 24 hours a day, and diligently planning for his rescue," Trump said.

According to Trump, dozens of aircrafts with the most lethal weapons in the world were dispatched to rescue the missing Colenel. The rescued airman suffered injuries after the ejection but could still walk, evading capture in the mountains for more than a day, according to news outlet Axios, which cited a US official.

American commandos converging on the officer fired their weapons to keep Iranian forces away from the rescue site, as per reports.

While bringing the airman back, two planes meant to transport him and his rescuers to safety were stuck in a remote base in Iran and had to be destroyed to prevent them from falling into Iranian hands, the New York Times and CBS reported.

US forces then used three other transport planes to carry the airman and his rescuers out of Iran.

"Congratulations President @realDonaldTrump! All Israelis rejoice in the incredible rescue of a brave American pilot by America's dauntless warriors. This proves that when free societies muster their courage and their resolve, they can confront seemingly insurmountable odds and overcome the forces of darkness and terror.

—Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli PM

Govt steps up LPG supply

NEW DELHI: Sale of small 5-kg LPG cylinders - available across-the-counter at LPG distributorships on showing valid ID proofs - has been stepped up, with about 6.6 lakh bottles sold since March 23 as the government ramps up supplies to meet demand.

Unlike the subsidised domestic 14.2-kg cylinders, the 5 kg bottles, called FTL cylinders, are priced at market rates and do not require any address proof for procurement from a nearby LPG distributorship.

"Yesterday (April 4), more than 90,000, 5Kg FTL cylinders were sold. Since March 23, 2026, about 6.6 lakh, 5 Kg FTL cylinders have been sold," the oil ministry said in a statement.

Qatar: Downed 2 missiles, numerous drones from Iran

QATAR

The Qatari Ministry of Defence said that the State of Qatar was subjected to an attack involving a number of drones and 2 cruise missiles launched from Iran on Sunday. "Our Armed Forces, by the grace of God, successfully intercepted all drones and both cruise missiles. May Allah protect Qatar, its Amir, its people, and all residents on its land," it said.

Iranian aggression against Bahrain and countries in the region targeted civilians and infrastructure, and must stop immediately.

-Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifam, King of Bahrain

Autos may thin out on B'luru roads

BENGALURU: Thousands of auto-rickshaw drivers in Bengaluru continue to face a harrowing time due to severe shortage of auto LPG. Of the 160 plus stations in Bengaluru, drivers claim only about 30 are currently functional, often operating on irregular schedules. With stocks expected to remain low until the next load arrives on Tuesday, commuters can expect fewer autos on the road on Monday and potential fare demands above the meter as drivers struggle to cover their increased fuel costs. On Sunday, drivers abandoned their daily fares to secure a few litres of gas in many parts of the city.

Nitish Kumar to take oath as RS member on April 10

PATNA

Nitish Kumar, incumbent Chief Minister of Bihar and chief of the JD(U), is set to take oath as a Rajya Sabha MP on April 10, Bihar BJP leader Sanjay Saraogi said on Sunday, reported.

Following the swearing-in, discussions on cabinet formation will be held jointly by the Chief Minister, the BJP's central leadership and allies in the National Democratic Alliance, Saraogi said, indicating a coordinated approach to the next phase of governance.

The development comes amid heightened political activity in Bihar, with Kumar recently resigning as a Member of the Bihar MLC, marking a significant transition as he prepares to assume office in the Rajya Sabha after being elected last month. On March 5, the 75-year-old leader had announced his decision in a message, expressing his long-standing desire to serve in both the state legislature and Parliament. He reiterated his commitment to building a "developed Bihar" and assured continued "cooperation and guidance" to the government.

The NDA welcomed his move, with Bihar DyCM saying, "It is his own decision. It is the constitutional arrangement that he will have to resign from one place if he is taking an oath at another..."

OUT OF THE WILD

Missing Kerala trekker found safe in Kodagu

BENGALURU

A 36-year-old woman from Kerala, who went missing during a trek to Tadiandamol peak in Kodagu district, has been found safe after an intensive multi-agency search operation, Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre announced on Sunday.

G.S. Sharanya had gone missing on April 2 while trekking with a group of 15 people and a nature guide. The group had set out earlier in the day, but Sharanya reportedly lost her way and did not return to the base camp, triggering immediate concern.

Search efforts were launched the same day, initially involving five teams. As the

operation intensified, a total of nine teams comprising forest officials, police personnel, and anti-Naxal force members were deployed. On Sunday, an additional 40 forest staff joined the effort, significantly boosting the search mission.

Addressing an emergency press briefing, the Minister confirmed that Sharanya has been located and is in good health. Arrangements are being made to safely return her to her home in Kerala.

The operation also saw support from local tribal communities, whose familiarity with the terrain proved valuable. Minister Khandre commended all personnel involved for their dedication and round-the-clock efforts.

He noted that surviving alone in the forest for three days highlighted Sharanya's courage and resilience. Lack of mobile connectivity in the dense forest made it difficult to pinpoint her location, contributing to the delay in rescue.

The Minister emphasised that the government remains committed to ensuring the safety of all trekkers, regardless of their origin, and reaffirmed its responsibility in such situations.

FCRA: "Modi trying to strike fear in Christians'

IDUKKI (KERALA)

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday alleged that Prime Minister Modi wants to amend the FCRA to attack Christian institutions, NGOs and civil society working in the field of public and social welfare.

Kharge, at a UDF public meeting in Idukki constituency, said the proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) shows the real intent of the BJP and Modi. He alleged that "it was not a reform, but an attack on the Christian institutions, NGOs and civil society". "PM Modi is trying to strike fear in the Christian institutions," he claimed.

QUICK READ

SSLC student ends life out of fear of failure

BENGALURU

In a shocking incident, a Class X student committed suicide at Thotadaguddahalli village in Bengaluru North taluk. A 16-year-old girl, Anu, decided to commit suicide by hanging herself as she feared that she would fail in the Class 10 exam. Anu, daughter of Govindaraju and Pushpalatha, committed suicide by hanging herself from a fan when no one was at home. The incident came to light when the parents had gone to work and the father returned home after work. The police reached the spot and sent the body to Nelamangala General Hospital for post-mortem. A case has been registered at Madanayakanahalli police station

Fire engulfs Peenya depot, 2 BMTC buses gutted

BENGALURU

Two BMTC buses caught fire due to a short circuit at Peenya 9th depot. Two buses were burnt to ashes in front of the crew. The fire broke out when the BMTC buses were stopped after finishing their duty and the fire was extinguished by the Peenya Fire Brigade personnel. A case has been registered at Peenya police station.

Rider dies as bike-car collide in Nelamangala

BENGALURU

A bike rider was killed in a head-on collision near Mallarabanwadi Cross in Nelamangala. The deceased has been identified as Narasimhamurthy V (54), a resident of Bolamaranahalli near Gollahalli in Nelamangala taluk.

It is learnt that the incident took place when he was on his way home after coming to the ragi procurement centre. Narasimha Murthy, who was seriously injured in the accident, was rushed to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The body has been sent for post-mortem at Nelamangala Civil Hospital. A case has been registered at Nelamangala traffic police station and further investigation is underway.

Patchy stray dog count under lends in B'luru

GBA's animal husbandry department has no overseeing powers to direct the corporations on how the surveys are conducted.

BENGALURU

Following the Supreme Court directive to identify, remove, and relocate stray dogs from institutional areas, three of Bengaluru's five city corporations have only released partial data on the number of dogs found in such premises.

Central, North, and West city corporations have reported 504, 875, and 591 stray dogs, respectively, in areas such as educational institutions, hospitals, sports complexes, and stadiums, as well as bus stands, depots, and railway stations.

South and East corporations have reported 331 and 369 dogs, respectively, at institutions. This takes the total number of dogs in institutional areas in Bengaluru to 2,670. However, concerns have been raised over the accuracy and completeness of the data. East and South corporations haven't officially released the number of stray dogs. South corporation has only released details of institutions and nodal officers, while East has only released the details of junior health inspectors in charge of each ward.

In the West corporation list, hundreds of institutions have not reported the number of stray dogs. In North corporation limits, the expansive GKVK campus has reported no stray dogs, an assertion that appears inconsistent with ground realities. Similarly, Central corporation's data does not include the Central College campus. According to the Chief Veterinary Officer of Bengaluru

Central City Corporation, MH Reddy, nodal officers from institutions were assisted by staff from the health and revenue departments during the survey. Since the current data reflects a survey conducted nearly three months ago, a review will be undertaken shortly, he said.

The infrastructure for relocating dogs is still being developed. A senior Central corporation official said 5 acres of land have been allocated in Bingipura, near Anekal, for a shelter with a capacity of 500 dogs. The facility, estimated to cost Rs 2 crore, is under construction. We invited tenders from NGOs to manage the shelter but received no response. The process has now been initiated again, he added.

In North corporation limits, two shelters are planned. While construction has commenced in Medarahalli, the Dasarahalli project is yet to be finalised, according to chief veterinary officer Sunil Kumar Havanur. West corporation has identified Summanahalli as the site for its proposed dog shelter. On the low numbers reported by some large institutions, GBA DD (Animal Husbandry) T Chandraiah said, some institutions might have taken a decision to build their own shelters.

13k industries, no effluent treatment plant, Pollution risks mount at Peenya

BENGALURU

Despite being one of Asia's largest industrial hubs, the Peenya Industrial Area continues to operate without a Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP), raising serious environmental and regulatory concerns more than five decades after it was set up.

The absence of a centralised waste treatment system threatens to undermine both its industrial viability and environmental sustainability, said a Senior KSPCB official. There is a lack of scientific disposal mechanisms for industrial effluents, the official added. Around 2,000 units in Peenya fall under the 'red' and 'yellow' pollution categories, including electroplating, chemical processing, textile dyeing and pharmaceutical manufacturing. While about 20 large industrial clusters have in-house treatment systems, smaller units depend on tanker-based disposal to a private facility in Doddaballapur, incurring costs of Rs 8-10 per litre.

Alarmingly, improper disposal by smaller units has led to untreated effluents entering stormwater drains, contaminating nearby lakes and groundwater reserves, an issue that could have long-term ecological and public health consequences, a senior GBA official said.The failure to establish a CETP is not due to a lack of intent alone. In 2018-19, the then Congress-JD(S) coalition government sanctioned Rs 10 crore to build a 200 KLD CETP on KSPCB land in Peenya. However, delays in execution meant the project never took off, and the funds were eventually returned to the government, highlighting systemic inefficiencies in project implementation, said a senior KSPCB official. KSP-

The area, according to the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), generates approximately 1,458 kilolitres of wastewater daily.

CB Chairman PM Narendraswamy has issued a clear warning on the urgency of the situation. From an environmental standpoint, steps must be taken at the earliest to establish a CETP. Failing this, action will be initiated against those responsible, he said.

Industrial stakeholders say the situation has reached a tipping point. Without providing any infrastructure, these KSPCBofficials are blaming us. We need the support of GBA and the government to have our own CETP, said R Shiva Kumar, former President of the Association.

Improper disposal a cause for concern

Alarmingly, improper disposal by smaller units has led to untreated effluents entering stormwater drains, contaminating nearby lakes and groundwater reserves — an issue that could have long-term ecological and public health consequences, a Senior GBA official said.

Auto land conversion gathers pace, 4.4K acres cleared for renewables

BENGALURU

The state government's move to introduce automated land conversion is beginning to show results, with nearly 1,900 applications covering over 4,427 acres cleared for renewable energy projects since its rollout in Janary.

Revenue department officials said applicants have paid more than Rs 15 crore in conversion fees, signalling strong investor interest.

Tumakuru district has emerged as the frontrunner with 692 acres converted, followed closely by Gadag with 686 acres. Northern districts are leading the adoption of the system. Gadag and Bidar together account for around 25 percent of the total auto-converted land, covering over 1,100 acres.

Other districts include Koppal with 342 acres, Vijayanagara (333 acres), Kalaburagi (244 acres) and Raichur (221 acres). For investors, the key change is speed. The new system has removed paperwork and in-person approvals, cutting down delays that were earlier a major concern. Rajender Kumar Kataria, Addl Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department, said the simplified process is already making a difference.

Earlier, there were complaints about delays in conversion, and industrialists were showing interest in investing in neighbouring states. With the simplification of the process, Karnataka is now more attractive for investors. We are the first state in the country to adopt auto-conversion, and other states, including Maharashtra, are showing interest in replicating this model, he said. The system, introduced on January 27, has seen steady uptake. Between then and April 2, the department received 1,893 applications, all of which have availed conversion under the new system.

Tankers deployed as 324 villages face acute water crisis

BENGALURU

With the onset of summer, drinking water scarcity has been reported at 324 villages in Karnataka, prompting the state government to step up supply through tankers and private borewells. Seasonal drying of water sources and reduced borewell yield have contributed to the situation. Karnataka has 26,676 villages across 31 districts, covering over 1 crore households. Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge said water is being supplied to 76 villages through as many tankers, while 248 villages are receiving water by leasing 280 private borewells. To meet immediate requirements, Rs 60 crore has been allocated. An additional Rs 48 crore has been released to clear pending bills for works undertaken under the task force in March. Another Rs 14.5 crore has been earmarked for the repair of water purification units. Officials at district, taluk and gram panchayat levels, including chief executive officers of zilla panchayats, are monitoring the situation and holding review meetings to ensure supply during the summer months. Priority is being given to preventing disruptions in rural drinking water access. Water quality testing is carried out across villages and habitation areas using field testing kits.

Samples with impurities exceeding permissible limits are being retested in laboratories, and alternative safe sources are being arranged in cases of confirmed contamination.

Gruha Lakshmi ruse: Woman's account used as mule in Rs 10L fraud

BENGALURU

A seemingly helpful offer to enrol in a govt welfare scheme turned into a financial nightmare for a 55-year-old homemaker, whose bank account was allegedly used to route cybercrime transactions worth over Rs 10 lakh.

According to a complaint filed by Parvathi, a resident of Ramamurthy Nagar, with the East Cyber Crime police, she was duped by Sangamesh, a former colleague of her son, Ramesh. The ordeal began in April 2025, when Sangamesh approached Ramesh claiming he could help enrol Parvathi in the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, promising a monthly benefit of Rs 2,000.

He said agents usually charged Rs 10,000 as a processing fee but offered to complete the process for Rs 7,000. At the time, Ramesh was largely occupied with caring for his ailing mother. Trusting Sangamesh, he explained the offer to Parvathi, who agreed.

Ramesh then shared his mother's PAN card details with Sangamesh over WhatsApp. Soon after, Sangamesh insisted that Parvathi open an account in a private bank's Banaswadi branch, claiming it would expedite approval of the scheme. With limited knowledge of banking procedures, Parvathi visited the branch with her son and opened a savings account as suggested.

Later that day, Sangamesh met Ramesh in Hoysalanagar and collected the bank kit, including the passbook, debit card, cheque book, along with Rs 5,000 as commission.

Within days, he also obtained the OTP under the pretext of logging into the account to check the application status. Weeks passed without any update.

When contacted, Sangamesh initially blamed delays on government server issues before eventually becoming unreachable.

The truth surfaced recently when police informed Parvathi that transactions worth Rs 10.6 lakh had been routed through her account, which was used as a mule account. She told investigators she had no knowledge of these transactions and had been misled by Sangamesh.

Police have registered a case under the Information Technology Act and Section 318 (cheating) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Cancer claim denial backfires, insurer ordered to cough up Rs 5L

BENGALURU

The Second Additional Bengaluru Urban district Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has held the insurer guilty of deficiency in service, and ordered it to reimburse the expenses with interest and compensation, totalling almost Rs 5 lakh.

The saga began on April 1, 2023, when Manjula Chandranth Sumathi, a 70-year-old resident of Banashankari I Stage, purchased a health insurance policy from Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd, declaring pre-existing conditions of diabetes and hypertension. She paid Rs 45,825 (including tax) for a Rs 10 lakh cover, valid till March 31, 2025. But in May 2024, Manjula developed a lump in her right breast and, on medical advice, was admitted to Excel Care Hospital.

She underwent treatment for breast cancer as an inpatient from July 7 to July 9. She paid almost Rs 3 lakh towards the hospital's final bill and an additional Rs 2 lakh towards pharmacy, bed, and related charges. On July 22, her daughter and nominee, Swetha Sumathi, 39, approached the insurer's Jayanagar branch seeking reimbursement.

GBA, 5 CITY CORPORATIONS START USING NEW LOGOS

BENGALURU

Bizman held for blackmailing, raping female customs officer Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and the city's five corporations have begun using new logos across their official websites and social media platforms.The logos were finalised at an executive committee meeting on March 20 chaired by deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar.

While an official unveiling was expected, the designs have instead been introduced without a formal launch. The GBA logo features a circular boundary tower motif, each differentiated by distinct colour schemes and bilingual text. Officials said the designs were created by students of Chitrakala Parishath. As many as 58 draft logo designs were prepared, reflecting a mix of heritage and contemporary styles. The selected ones were picked during the meeting, a official said.

The five corporations have adopted a uniform format with the authority's name in Kannada and English, retaining the Kempegowda-era boundary tower from the former BBMP emblem. It also includes an image of Kempegowda.

FAST SERVICE FOR CITIZENS

GBA floats doorstep services with 48-hr verification push

BENGALURU

Bengaluru's civic body, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), is rolling out a game-changing initiative through Guarantee Seva Kendras (GSKs) and trained Seva Mitras to deliver government services right at residents' doorsteps. Under the GBA framework, these agents will handle applications, verifications within 48 hours, and documentation for essentials like property tax, trade licenses, birth/death certificates, and utility connections.

Available from 8 AM to 7 PM, the service targets vulnerable groups including seniors and the disabled, eliminating long queues and office visits.

Seva Mitras, equipped with tablets for digital processing and official IDs for trust, will guide users through forms, collect papers, and ensure swift approvals. This citizen-centric model addresses common pain points like digital barriers and mobility issues in India's Silicon Valley, where rapid urbanization strains administration.

GBA Commissioner Inchenni Srinivas stated the programme aims to boost efficiency and inclusivity, with pilots starting in high-density wards. Verification in 48 hours is our commitment, services at your home, results in your hand, he said. Early feedback highlights reduced corruption risks via transparent tracking.

The rollout coincides with GBA's push for tech-integrated governance, building on existing GSKs. Training modules cover 20+ services, with scalability planned citywide by mid-2026. Residents can book via app or helpline, paying nominal fees only for premium docs.Experts praise the move as a blueprint for urban India, potentially cutting service times by 70 percent.

Bizman held for blackmailing, raping female customs officer

BENGALURU

The Police have arrested a businessman on charges of blackmailing and sexually assaulting a female customs officer. Businessman M Kripalani has been arrested by the police. The accused allegedly blackmailed and sexually assaulted a female officer and threatened to make her private photos and videos viral if she did not listen to him. Fed up with Kripalani's harassment, the female officer finally complained to the police and a rape case was registered against him at the Yelahanka police station. The case was later transferred to the Indiranagar police station. The authorities had instructed the Pulakeshinagar ACP and Inspector to investigate the matter. Now, the police have succeeded in arresting the accused Kripalani.

Apart from rape, the woman officer has made several serious allegations against the accused, and Kripalani, who was running an electronic business, has been accused of doing a lot of business without the customs' notice.

QUICK READ

Lokayukta to Hold Public Grievance Meeting on April 10

SHIRAHATTI

The Karnataka Lokayukta will organize a public relations and grievance redressal meeting in Shirahatti town on April 10, offering citizens a direct platform to voice their concerns to officials. As per the directions of the Additional Director General of Police of the Karnataka Lokayukta, officers from the Gadag unit will conduct the meeting in Shirahatti. The initiative aims to strengthen transparency and provide an accessible forum for the public to present complaints and grievances. The meeting is scheduled to be held at the tehsildar's office in Shirahatti on Friday, April 10, from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm. During this session, citizens will have the opportunity to directly interact with Lokayukta officials and submit their concerns regarding administrative issues, corruption, or delays in public services.

Babu Jagjivan Ram Birth Anniversary Celebrated

KOPPAL

The birth anniversary of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Koppal, with the district administration organizing a grand programme to honor the legacy of the prominent national leader. The celebrations in Koppal began with floral tributes at the Memorial Park, where dignitaries gathered to pay their respects. Statues of Babu Jagjivan Ram, along with other revered figures, were garlanded as a mark of homage. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Suresh Itnal and several other officials and public representatives participated in the ceremony. They offered floral tributes and remembered the contributions of Jagjivan Ram, particularly his role in shaping modern India and advocating for social justice and equality. The programme also included processions across the city, with participants carrying portraits of the leader and raising slogans in his honor.

Lokayukta Orders Probe After Woman Declared Dead

HOSPET

A shocking case of alleged administrative negligence has emerged from Hospet, where a woman was declared dead in official Aadhaar records despite being alive. The incident has prompted the Lokayukta to initiate action against officials and order an investigation. The case involves Hampamma, a resident of Dharmasagar village in Hospet taluk of Vijayanagara district, whose Aadhaar records reportedly showed her as deceased. The issue came to light following media reports, triggering swift action from Justice B. Veerappa, who took suo motu cognizance of the matter. A complaint has been registered against three officials, including the Hospet Tahsildar, the Executive Officer, and the Gram Panchayat PDO. The Lokayukta observed that the incident was not a minor administrative error but a serious violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution, including the right to equality and the right to life.

Portrait Procession Held to Mark Birth Anniversary of Babu Jagjivan Ram

A grand portrait procession was organized in Dharwad district to commemorate the birth anniversary of Ex- Dy PM Babu Jagjivan Ram. The event witnessed participation from govt officials, staff, and members of the public, who gathered to pay heartfelt tributes to the veteran leader.

DHARWAD

The program was held at the Dharwad District Collectorate premises, where a large number of attendees assembled to honor Babu Jagjivan Ram. The highlight of the event was a ceremonial procession featuring a beautifully adorned portrait of the late leader, carried with reverence across the premises. The atmosphere was marked by respect and admiration as participants remembered his immense contributions to the nation.

Senior officials and dignitaries present at the event offered floral tributes to the portrait, while several speakers reflected on Jagjivan Ram's enduring legacy. They highlighted his pivotal role in shaping India's political and social landscape, particularly his unwavering commitment to social justice, equality, and the upliftment of marginalized communities.

Jagjivan Ram, often regarded as one of India's most influential leaders, held several key positions during his long political career, including that of Deputy Prime Minister. His leadership during critical periods of India's history and his efforts to strengthen democratic values continue to be widely acknowledged and respected.

Speakers at the event emphasized the relevance of his ideals in today's society, urging citizens, especially the younger generation, to draw inspiration from his life and work. They noted that his vision for an inclusive and equitable society remains a guiding principle for policymakers and public servants.

The procession also served as a platform to educate attendees about his contributions and sacrifices. Many participants expressed pride in being part of the tribute, stating that such events help preserve the legacy of national leaders and instill a sense of responsibility toward nation-building.

The program concluded with a collective pledge by attendees to uphold the values of justice, equality, and service that Jagjivan Ram stood for. The reinforced the importance of remembering and celebrating leaders whose work continues to shape the nation's progress.

Pramod Muthalik Visits Victim's Family, Demands Strict Action in Assault Case

HUBBALLI

During his visit to Hubballi, Pramod Muthalik met with the victim's family to express support and solidarity. The case, which involves serious allegations against a gym trainer, has drawn widespread attention and concern in the region. Muthalik interacted with the family members and assured them that efforts would be made to ensure justice is served.

Addressing the media later, he demanded stringent legal action against the accused, identified as Sameer Mulla. He stated that such incidents must be dealt with firmly to prevent similar occurrences in the future. Muthalik emphasized that the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary must act decisively and without delay.

He further warned that if appropriate action is not taken, protests, including a bandh in Hubballi, could be organized to press for justice. His remarks reflect the growing anger and concern among sections of the public regarding the case.

According to statements made during the interaction, the accused has been alleged to have sexually harassed multiple young women who visited the gym. The case has reportedly taken a serious turn, with calls for a thorough investigation and strict punishment if the allegations are proven.

The incident has triggered strong reactions, with community members and activists demanding accountability and swift legal proceedings. Authorities have been urged to handle the case with sensitivity while ensuring that due process is followed.

As the investigation progresses, the focus remains on ensuring justice for the victim and maintaining law and order in the region. The situation continues to be closely monitored, with officials expected to take necessary steps based on the findings of the inquiry.

Min Zameer Clarifies Davanagere Visit: It Is Not a Show of Strength

HUBBALLI

In Hubballi, Minister Zameer Ahmed clarified that his visit to Davanagere was purely for campaigning purposes and not intended as a display of political strength. His remarks come amid speculation surrounding his recent activities in the region.

Speaking to the media in Hubballi, Zameer Ahmed Khan addressed concerns and interpretations regarding his visit to Davanagere. He emphasized that the trip was part of routine election campaigning and should not be misconstrued as an attempt to project power or influence within the party or the constituency.

There is no question of it being a show of strength, he stated, seeking to put an end to ongoing speculation. His comments follow discussions within political circles suggesting that his presence in Davanagere carried deeper political implications.

Zameer Ahmed also pointed out that he did not make extensive public statements during his visit to Davanagere. He noted that his limited remarks were being overanalyzed and stressed that there was no underlying anger or dissatisfaction driving his campaign efforts. According to him, the visit was focused solely on engaging with party workers and voters as part of ongoing election activities.

Political observers had earlier speculated that internal differences or strategic positioning might have influenced his visit. However, the minister dismissed such claims, reiterating that his actions were aligned with standard campaign practices.

The clarification comes at a time when political activities are intensifying across Karnataka, with leaders actively participating in outreach programs to strengthen their party's presence. Statements and movements of key leaders are often closely scrutinized, leading to varying interpretations. Zameer Ahmed's remarks aim to bring clarity and reduce any confusion among party members and the public. By emphasizing the routine nature of his visit, he sought to reinforce unity and focus within the party ranks.

As campaigning continues, leaders across the state are expected to maintain active engagement with voters, while also addressing speculation and maintaining transparency regarding their political activities.

Allegations of Bribery Surface Amid Drinking Water Shortage

HUBBALLI

Residents of Hubballi have raised serious allegations of bribery in the distribution of drinking water tankers, even as the city continues to face a prolonged water shortage. Locals claim that access to water is being unfairly controlled, leading to growing anger in affected areas.

The issue has been reported from Krishnagiri Colony in Anand Nagar, where residents allege that drinking water is not being supplied regularly despite a shortage persisting for over 20 days. As per standard arrangements, water tankers are expected to be supplied by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) in areas facing delays in piped water distribution.

However, locals claim that the personnel responsible for releasing water tankers are demanding money from residents. According to the allegations, an amount of around Rs 800 is being collected from households in exchange for access to water. Residents state that those who pay receive water, while others are left without supply.

The situation escalated after residents reportedly caught a wallman red-handed while accepting money. It is also alleged that digital transactions were used to collect the payments, further strengthening the claims. In some instances, locals say that an entire tanker meant for a colony was diverted to a single household that had made the payment.

The allegations have sparked outrage among residents, who are already struggling due to the ongoing water crisis. Many have expressed frustration that a basic necessity like drinking water is being exploited for personal gain.

Citizens have demanded immediate intervention from authorities, calling for a thorough investigation into the matter. They have urged officials to take strict action against those involved and ensure fair and transparent distribution of water tankers.

Seer Visits Rudraswamy Mutt, Blesses Devotees

BELAGAVI

Abhinava Gavisiddheshwara Swamigal of Koppal visited Rudraswamy Mutt in Belagavi district and blessed devotees during his visit, drawing a large gathering of followers.

The visit took place following an invitation from the Aravoli-Bilaki Mutt in Khanapur taluk of Belagavi.

Abhinava Gavisiddheshwara Swamigal, a respected spiritual leader from Koppal, arrived at Sri Rudraswamy Mutt in Aravalli, where he was warmly received by devotees and organizers.

During his visit, the seer inspected the construction work of the newly developed Rudraswamy Mutt at Avalli-Bilaki. He appreciated the efforts taken in developing the mutt and offered blessings for its continued growth as a spiritual center.

Hundreds of devotees gathered at the mutt to seek his blessings and participate in the religious gathering.

The visit was part of his journey to attend the golden jubilee celebrations of a government school at Hunshikatti village in Kittur taluk. Despite his busy schedule, the seer took time to visit the mutt and interact with devotees, which was widely appreciated by the local community.

Devotees expressed their happiness at receiving the seer's blessings and described the visit as a spiritually uplifting experience.

The presence of the seer added significance to the occasion, with many considering it a moment of great religious importance.

Call for Women's Empowerment at Akkamahadevi Jayanti Programme

DHARWAD

Akkamahadevi Jayanti was celebrated in Dharwad with a strong message on women's empowerment and cultural values. Speakers at the event emphasized the importance of self-reliance among women while also highlighting the need to preserve traditional heritage.

The programme was held at Lingayat Bhavan in Dharwad and was organized by the district unit of the All India Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha. Renowned writer Dr. A.K. Ramachandran inaugurated the event and addressed the gathering, stressing that women should strive to lead self-reliant lives and achieve a respected position in society.

In his speech, Dr. Ramachandran highlighted the legacy of Akka Mahadevi, stating that she played a significant role in freeing women from patriarchal constraints and advocating for equal rights.

He noted that her teachings remain relevant even today and continue to inspire generations.

At the same time, he expressed concern over what he described as changing social behavior among some youth. He cautioned that cultural values could be affected if traditions are not preserved.

He suggested that children should be educated about traditional practices such as Vibhuti, Rudraksha, Ishtalinga Puja, and traditional attire to maintain cultural identity. Deputy Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation Anuradha Vastrada also spoke on the occasion.

Allegations of Disrespect Mark Babu Jagjivan Ram Jayanti Observance

NAVALGUND

Amid nationwide celebrations marking the birth anniversary of Babu Jagjivan Ram, controversy has emerged in Navalgund over alleged negligence and disrespect during official observances. Local groups have expressed anger over the manner in which the occasion was reportedly handled.

The issue surfaced in Navalgund, where it was alleged that the birth anniversary of Babu Jagjivan Ram was not properly observed at a government office linked to the Malaprabha Right Bank Canal project. According to reports, the event was expected to be conducted as per government guidelines, which mandate that such national commemorations be observed across all departments.

However, it has been claimed that no senior officials were present during the observance. Instead, only clerical staff reportedly carried out a basic ritual. Allegations further state that a proper portrait of the leader was not arranged, and an existing photograph in the office was used in a makeshift manner, with minimal arrangements such as plastic flowers placed as tribute.

The situation has drawn sharp criticism from local Dalit organizations, who visited the office and expressed strong dissatisfaction over what they described as disrespect toward a prominent national leader. Members of these groups emphasized that Jagjivan Ram's contributions to the nation and to social justice demand greater respect and proper commemoration. They warned that failure to take appropriate action against the responsible officials could lead to intensified protests. Representatives stated that such negligence reflects poorly on administrative accountability and undermines the significance of national observances meant to honor influential leaders.

The incident has raised questions about the implementation of government directives at the local level. Observers note that commemorative events are not only symbolic but also play a crucial role in promoting awareness about the contributions of historical figures.

QUICK READ

Three-day spiritual summer camp begins for children

MYSURU

A three-day summer camp was inaugurated at Jayalakshmipuram Brahmakumari Seva Kendra, focusing on holistic development of children through spiritual learning and activities. C.A. Srinivas Murthy, representing an international spiritual organization, inaugurated the camp and stressed the need for a Gurukul-style education system. He expressed concern that modern education often confines children within classrooms and limits their overall growth. He encouraged participants to actively engage in all activities during the camp. Rajyogini Brahmakumari Rashmiji highlighted the importance of meditation for improving concentration and mental clarity. She advised children to practice positive thinking in their daily lives. BK Aaradhya from Om Shanti New Service spoke about nurturing leadership qualities, stating that today's children are the future leaders of society. The camp aims to build confidence, discipline, and values among young participants.

Free cancer screening camp for women on April 7

BIDAR

A free cancer screening camp for women will be held at Gudage Hospital in the city on April 7 from 9 am to 4 pm, said specialist Dr. Sharada Sachina Gudage. The camp will offer screening for various cancers, including breast cancer, aiming to promote early detection and awareness among women. Dr. Srinivas Tejaswi Aadad, known for his work in cancer research, will also take part in the program. The event will be inaugurated by Pujya Sri Dr. Ganga B.K. Akka, President of Basava Seva Pratishthan, while Dr. Chandrakath Gudage will preside over the function. Several dignitaries, including leaders from Rotary and Inner Wheel clubs, are expected to attend. Organizers have urged women to make full use of this free medical service and get timely health check-ups. They emphasized that early diagnosis can save lives and reduce risks.

Jagjivan Ram Jayanti celebrated with tribute to green revolution pioneer

MLA Vittal Katakadonda praised Jagjivan Ram's agricultural reforms, calling him alongside B. R. Ambedkar vital to India's development

VIJAYAPURA

The 119th birth anniversary of former Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram was observed with reverence by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Social Welfare Department at Kandagal Hanumantharaya Auditorium on Sunday.

Inaugurating the programme, Nagathan MLA Vittal Katakadonda said that Dr. Jagjivan Ram was a visionary leader who played a crucial role in transforming India's agricultural sector. By promoting modern farming practices, he significantly boosted food production and strengthened the country's food security, earning recognition as a pioneer of the Green Revolution. He noted that leaders like B. R. Ambedkar and Dr. Jagjivan Ram, who fought against social injustice and inequality, are like "two eyes of the nation." He also highlighted Jagjivan Ram's contributions as Defence and Agriculture Minister, stating that his reforms greatly supported national development.

District Collector Dr. Anand K., who presided over the event, said that at a time when India faced severe food shortages, Dr. Jagjivan Ram laid a strong foundation for food security. By ensuring support prices for farmers, he helped stabilise the agricultural economy and protect farmers' interests. Prof. Lakshmidevi, in her keynote address, described Dr. Jagjivan Ram as an inspiring statesman whose life continues to guide future generations. She praised his service across multiple ministries, including labour, agriculture, defence, and railways.The programme began with the reading of the Preamble to the Constitution. Floral tributes were later offered to his statue near the Satellite Bus Stand. Earlier, a grand procession featuring cultural performances was held from Babu Jagjivan Ram Circle, adding colour and vibrancy to the celebrations. Officials, public representatives, and citizens attended the event.

Jagjivan Ram Jayanti celebrated with pride

Minister Rahim Khan praised Jagjivan Ram's rise, agricultural contributions, and legacy; Samata Din honors his equality and social justice ideals

BIDAR

The 119th birth anniversary of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram was celebrated with respect and enthusiasm in Bidar, with leaders highlighting his contributions to the nation.

Municipal Administration and Haj Minister Rahim Khan said Babu Jagjivan Ram was an unmatched leader who rose from an oppressed background to become Deputy Prime Minister. He noted that Babuji played a key role in overcoming India's food crisis during the 1970s and helped make the country self-reliant in agriculture.

The program was organized at Dr. Channabasava Pattadevara Ranga Mandira under the joint efforts of the district administration and various departments. April 5 is observed as Samata Din to remember his ideals of equality and social justice.

Rahim Khan said Babuji's service as Union Minister, Defence Minister during the 1971 war, and Agriculture Minister remains unforgettable. He urged people to follow his path of equality.

He also announced that Rs 2 crore has already been allocated for development works related to Babu Jagjivan Ram in the district, with more support to be provided if needed.

District In-charge Minister Ishwar Khandre, in his message, paid tribute and said Babuji's life continues to inspire society.

A special lecture on his life was delivered by Professor Dr. Mahadevi Hebbale.

MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale, Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Sharma, and other officials attended the event.

The celebration saw participation from several leaders and citizens, who paid floral tributes and remembered the legacy of the great leader.

MP G. Kumar Nayak consoled families, promised compensation, condemned negligence over unsafe well causing tragic children's deaths incident

Four children die after falling into agricultural well in Yadgir

YADGIRI

In a tragic incident, four children lost their lives after accidentally falling into an agricultural well at Naganur village in Surapura taluk of Yadgir district, creating shock and grief in the region.

Raichur Lok Sabha MP G. Kumar Nayak visited the village and consoled the bereaved families. Deeply moved by the heartbreaking scene, the MP became emotional on seeing the parents mourning the loss of their children. He expressed profound sorrow and termed the incident as extremely painful.

During his visit, he offered words of comfort to the grieving families and assured them that the government would provide appropriate compensation to the families of the deceased children. Later, the MP inspected the spot where the incident occurred. He expressed strong anger over the unsafe condition of the agricultural well and criticised the negligence of concerned officials. He stated that proper safety measures were not taken during the construction of the well, which led to the unfortunate tragedy.

MP Kumar Nayak warned that strict action would be taken against officials found responsible for negligence. He emphasised the need for ensuring safety around open wells to prevent such incidents in the future.Villagers extended their support to the MP and demanded accountability from the authorities, urging immediate steps to secure all open wells in the area. The incident has raised serious concerns over safety measures in rural infrastructure across the district.

Haveri prepares for 2026 Census drive

HAVERI

A training workshop for the 2026 Census program was held at Hukkeri Math High School, where officials emphasized the importance of accurate data collection for the district and the nation. Haveri District Collector addressed the participants, noting that the census scheduled for 2021 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.He said all necessary preparations have now been made for the 2026-27 census and urged officials and the public to actively participate. He encouraged residents to complete household enumeration and self-reporting diligently and stressed the need to start the census soon after April 15 to ensure its success. The District Collector recalled that Haveri had achieved first place in the state during the socio-economic census and expressed confidence that similar cooperation would help the district excel again.

Suo moto case filed after assault on couple

HASSAN

Police have registered a suo moto case in connection with an alleged assault on a couple in Araseikere town, bringing fresh attention to the incident that had initially gone unreported by the victims.

According to police sources, the case was filed based on a complaint by Araseikere police station PSI Dilip Kumar. The incident took place on August 3, when a couple from Tiptur in Tumakuru district was returning home after visiting Siddeswaraswamy temple.

During their journey, their bike reportedly brushed against a man while overtaking in Araseikere. This led to an argument, following which Sufian, said to be the son of a local political associate, along with others, allegedly assaulted the man in public.

After the incident, police traced the couple and recorded their statements. The accused also gave their version. Initially, the couple stated that both sides were at fault and did not wish to file a formal complaint.However, the issue gained attention after protests by pro-Hindu organizations demanding strict action against those involved in the assault. Responding to public concern, the police took the initiative to register a suo moto case at Araseikere Nagar police station.Officials said that further investigation is underway and appropriate legal action will be taken based on evidence.

Main accused in murder case injured in police firing, arrested

KALABURAGI

In a major development in the murder case related to former minister and Congress leader Revu Nayak Belamagi, the Kalaburagi City Police apprehended the main accused, Ishwar Rathore, after opening fire in self-defence on the outskirts of Kalaburagi.

According to Police Commissioner Sharanappa S.D, several accused had already been arrested in connection with the case. Acting on credible information about the whereabouts of the prime accused, a police team led by Inspector Guru Patil of Station Bazaar Police Station proceeded to Kesaratagi area to apprehend him. During the operation, Ishwar Rathore allegedly attacked a police officer while attempting to evade arrest. In response, Inspector Guru Patil initially fired a warning shot in the air. However, as the accused continued to resist and attempted to escape, the police were compelled to open fire, injuring him in the leg and successfully taking him into custody.

The injured accused, along with the police personnel who sustained injuries during the incident, was immediately shifted to the Government Gymnasium Trauma Care Centre in Kalaburagi for treatment. Senior police officials, including Commissioner Sharanappa S.D, visited the hospital and reviewed the condition of the injured. Security has been tightened in and around the hospital premises as a precautionary measure.

Three children injured in stray dog attack, residents demand action

BIDAR

A stray dog attack in Basavakalyan has left three children injured, triggering concern and anger among local residents over the growing menace of stray dogs.

According to sources, the incident occurred when the children were playing near their house. A stray dog reportedly attacked them and Suddenly, biting all three before locals rushed to their rescue. The injured children were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where they are currently undergoing treatment. Their condition is said to be stable.The incident has sparked outrage among residents, who allege that the problem of stray dogs has been increasing in the area for some time. Locals expressed frustration over the lack of effective measures by civic authorities to control the stray dog population. Residents have urged the concerned authorities to take immediate action, including measures such as sterilisation drives, vaccination, and removal of aggressive stray animals from residential areas to prevent such incidents in the future. As of now, officials are yet to take strict action, residents said, adding that urgent steps are needed to ensure the safety of children and the general public.

Demand for green shade screens at traffic signals amid rising heat

BIDAR

With temperatures rising sharply, citizens in Bidar are facing increasing discomfort, particularly at traffic signals where commuters are forced to wait under the scorching sun. In response, the Karnataka Yuva Sangha Samsthegalu Okkoota has submitted a memorandum to Municipal Commissioner Mukul Jain, urging the installation of green shade screens at major traffic junctions.According to the memorandum, the city is currently experiencing temperatures ranging between 35°C and 38°C, with the possibility of further increase in the coming days. The federation highlighted that two-wheeler riders and other commuters waiting at traffic signals are the worst affected, as they have to endure prolonged exposure to intense heat. Key traffic junctions such as Ambedkar Circle, Bhagat Singh Circle, Basaveshwar Circle, and Gumpa Ring Road signals witness heavy vehicular movement throughout the day. During peak hours, hundreds of vehicles line up at these signals, leaving commuters stranded under direct sunlight.The organisation pointed out that installing green shade nets at these busy junctions would provide much-needed relief to the public. It also noted that similar measures have already been implemented successfully in some districts of the state, proving beneficial for commuters. ting the memorandum.

EMPOWERMENT IN ACTION

Kalaburagi leads in women empowerment: DC Taranum

KALABURAGI

Highlighting the progress of women in various spheres, Deputy Commissioner Fouziah Taranum said that Kalaburagi district is emerging as a frontrunner in women empowerment, with women actively participating and making decisions across economic, social, and political sectors.

She was speaking after inaugurating the Akka Mahadevi Jayanti celebration, lecture, and felicitation programme initiated at Vidyanagar. The event was jointly organised by Akkamahadevi Mahila Trust and Vidyanagar Welfare Society. The Deputy Commissioner noted that women in the district are gaining equal opportunities and strengthening their role in decision-making processes. "It is a matter of pride that women are progressing confidently in all fields. The increasing number of programmes on women empowerment reflects the strength of this movement," she said.

She further pointed out that several women's organisations are actively working in the district, and that she frequently receives invitations—almost two to three every week—to participate in programmes focused on empowering women. "As a woman leading the district administration, I stand as an example of this positive change," she added.

Calling upon parents to prioritise education for girls, she emphasised that quality education is key to building a strong and self-reliant society. During the programme, Dr. Shivaleela Chatnalli delivered a lecture on the life and vachanas of Akka Mahadevi. She highlighted that Akka Mahadevi's literary contributions were shaped by the challenges she faced in life, enriching Kannada literature.

Jagjivan Ram Jayanti celebrated with grand procession

KOPPAL

The 119th birth anniversary of Babu Jagjivan Ram, hailed as the pioneer of India's Green Revolution, was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Koppal, highlighting his lifelong commitment to equality and social justice.

Inaugurating the programme at Sahitya Bhavan, Legislative Council member Hemalatha Nayak said B. R. Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram are "like two eyes" for society, as both leaders fought tirelessly for equality and upliftment of oppressed communities. She noted that Jagjivan Ram played a key role in improving food production during times of crisis and worked to empower the working class.

District Collector Dr. Suresh B. Itnal emphasized Jagjivan Ram's contributions in agriculture and defense, recalling his leadership during the 1968 food crisis. He said the policies introduced under his leadership helped India achieve food security and laid the foundation for the Green Revolution.

QUICK READ

119 children named after Shivakumar Sri

TUMAKURU

A Namkarana Mahotsav was held at Siddaganga Math, where 119 children were named after Shivakumar Sri. Boys were named Shivakumar and girls Shivani. The event was organized by Shivkumar Srigala Dasoha Trust, which also distributed cots, clothes, mosquito coils, and mattress pads to each child. Parents performed the Namasmarana ritual of Lord Shivakumar and received blessings. Originally planned on Lord Shiva's birth anniversary, the ceremony was rescheduled due to security arrangements for the President's program.

Hunsur celebrates 119th birth anniversary of Jagjivan Ram

HUNSUR

The 119th birth anniversary of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram was celebrated at Ambedkar Bhavan, Hunsur, organized by the Taluk Administration. MLA J.T. Harish Gowda inaugurated the program by lighting the ceremonial lamp and spoke about Jagjivan Ram's role as Deputy Prime Minister and pioneer of the Green Revolution. He urged citizens to remember leaders who fought untouchability and social inequality.

Internal reservation issue raised at Afzalpur event

Arun Kumar Patil praised Jagjivan Ram's upliftment work; assured statue, community hall, and support for internal reservation issues raised by local leaders

AFZALPUR

The birth anniversary of Babu Jagjivan Ram was observed meaningfully at the taluk office, where along with tributes, an important discussion on internal reservation also took place.

Speaking at the event, Kalyan Karnataka Road Transport Corporation Chairman Arun Kumar M.Y. Patil highlighted the immense contributions of Jagjivan Ram towards the upliftment of backward and oppressed communities. He described him as a visionary leader whose ideals continue to guide society.

During the programme, Madiga community leader Shrikanta Mashalkara urged the authorities to allocate land for installing a statue of Jagjivan Ram in the town. Responding positively, Arun Kumar Patil assured that the matter would be taken up with local MLAs and necessary steps would be initiated for both the statue and a community hall.

The issue of internal reservation gained attention when youth leader Parushurama demanded that it be seriously considered at the government level. He insisted that the matter be discussed in the next special cabinet meeting. Arun Kumar Patil acknowledged the demand and assured support in raising it before the government.Tehsildar Sanjeevakumar Dasara, who presided over the event, said Jagjivan Ram was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and played a significant role in the freedom struggle.Several officials and community leaders attended the programme, recalling Jagjivan Ram's social reforms and contributions, while emphasizing the need to continue his vision of equality and justice.

Nation's progress key to individual growth: MLA

CHITRADURGA

MLA honored Jagjivan Ram, praised 1971 war leadership, patriotism, and pledged ₹3 crore for Bhavan completion

MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappi said that the progress of individuals is closely linked to the progress of the nation, recalling the ideals of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram during his birth anniversary celebration on Sunday.

The programme was organised by the district administration at Lidkar Bhavan in Chitradurga, where leaders and officials paid tribute to the veteran leader. Addressing the gathering, the MLA said that Babu Jagjivan Ram's message that "our progress lies in the progress of the country" remains relevant even today. He stressed that patriotism must come first and begin with simple acts like respecting and singing the national anthem.

He praised Babu Jagjivan Ram's leadership during the 1971 war, which led to the creation of Bangladesh in just 13 days, and described his life as dedicated to the welfare of the nation. The MLA also spoke about the pending construction of Babu Jagjivan Ram Bhavan and assured that around ₹3 crore would be arranged soon to complete the project and open it for public use.

Shivsharan Haralaya Swamiji said that Babu Jagjivan Ram practiced what he preached and worked for social and economic equality. He recalled Babuji's efforts in securing voting rights for the common people and his role in strengthening agriculture during the Green Revolution.

Additional District Collector B.T. Kumaraswamy described Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Babu Jagjivan Ram as pillars of India's development and equality. He encouraged students to avoid excessive mobile use and focus on reading and quality education to succeed in a competitive world.

As part of the celebrations, a grand procession was held in the city, featuring folk art groups and community participation. The procession began near Sampige Siddeshwar School and concluded at Lidkar Bhavan.

Several dignitaries, officials, and community leaders attended the programme. Civic workers were honoured, prizes were distributed to students, and the preamble of the Constitution was read, making the event both meaningful and inspiring for the public.

P.N. Manjunath Reddy elected President, Shabbir Ahmed Pasha first minority Vice President; election unanimous, praised by KMF Director

Unanimous election strengthens Kasaba cooperative leadership unity

SRINIVASPUR

The Kasaba Silk Growers and Farmers Service Cooperative Society witnessed a smooth and unanimous election of its new leadership, reflecting unity among members.

Pataapalli P.N. Manjunath Reddy was elected as President, while Shabbir Ahmed Pasha became the Vice President without opposition. The election was held at the society office, where both leaders were the only nominees. Election Officer Abid Hussain M. officially declared them elected.Pasha's selection is seen as a historic moment, as it marks the first time a member from the minority community has been chosen as Vice President in the society.KMF Director K.K. Manjunath Reddy congratulated the new leaders and

said the unanimous process showed strong cooperation among members. He noted that the election was conducted under the guidance of former Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar.He advised the new team to focus on farmers' welfare, improve financial stability, recover pending loans, and expand services for members.President Manjunath Reddy thanked leaders and supporters for their trust. He promised to work with all directors to develop the cooperative into a model institution and provide better facilities to farmers.Vice President Shabbir Ahmed Pasha said his election reflects inclusive growth in the cooperative sector. He assured that he would serve honestly and work for the benefit of all members.

Several leaders, directors, and community members attended the event, expressing hope that the new leadership will strengthen the society and improve services for farmers in the region.

New multi-specialty dental clinic opens in Mangaluru

Mangaluru

Brace Max Multi-Specialty Dental Clinic, Orthodontics and Implant Center was inaugurated on the third floor of Kankanadi Gate Commercial Complex in Mangalore, offering advanced dental care and training opportunities for fresh graduates.

The inauguration was graced by Karnataka Legislative Assembly President U.T. Khader, who praised the clinic's initiative. The clinic is managed by Dr. Ashraf Konoje and Dr. Mehnaz Kodaje, both with extensive experience in Bengaluru and abroad, aiming to provide quality dental services while mentoring new professionals.

Chief guest Dr. A.J., a renowned cardiologist, and other dignitaries including Purushottam Ramaiah, Salim Altaf Diamond, and Sattar Sultan Gold extended their best wishes. Drs. Karthikeyan from Malaysia and Parag Sehgal joined via video call to congratulate the team.

LPG shortage halts autos in Chikkamagaluru city

CHIKKAMAGALURU

A severe shortage of LPG has brought auto services in Chikkamagaluru to a standstill, leaving drivers in distress and affecting daily commuters.

Auto drivers said LPG has not been available in the city for the past six days due to supply disruptions linked to the West Asian crisis. As a result, nearly 70 percent of autos are off the roads.

Out of around 4,200 autos in the city, nearly 3,500 are parked at homes as all three LPG gas banks have reportedly run out of stock. Only a few electric, petrol, and CNG autos are operating.

The Auto Drivers and Owners Association has warned of an indefinite strike if the issue is not resolved soon. Drivers said they have repeatedly approached the district administration and the Food Department, but no solution has been provided so far.

Association secretary Jagdish said the situation has made it difficult for drivers to earn a living. He also raised concerns about rising LPG prices, which have reportedly increased from ₹57 per kg earlier to around ₹140 per kg now.

Drivers have urged authorities to take immediate action to restore LPG supply and control prices. They warned that if the problem continues, all auto services may be completely stopped in the coming days.The shortage has caused inconvenience to passengers as well, with fewer autos available for daily travel.

Officials are yet to respond to the situation, while drivers hope for quick relief to resume normal services.

Remembering Babu Jagjivan Ram's life legacy

WADI

The birth anniversary of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram, former Deputy Prime Minister of India, was celebrated at the BJP office in Wadi on Sunday, honoring his contributions to social reform and the nation.Speaking at the event, BJP District Backward Classes Vice President Basavaraj Panchal highlighted Jagjivan Ram's lifelong mission of promoting equality and respect among all citizens. He praised the leader's efforts during India's food shortage era, particularly his role in pioneering the Green Revolution, which improved the standard of living for countless people. Panchal urged youth to adopt such ideals and make them a part of their lives.BJP President Veeranna Yari called Jagjivan Ram one of the country's greatest freedom fighters and a highly efficient administrator. He said Jagjivan Ram's dedication to workers' welfare and rural development makes him a timeless role model for political leaders and citizens alike.During the program, Raju Mukkanna, newly elected President of Madiga Samaj, and Vice President of BJP District SC Murcha, were felicitated for their contributions. Other attendees included local BJP leaders Ravi Nayak, Daulatarao Chittapurkara, Hari Galande, Richard Mareddy, Bhimarao Subedara, Mallikarjuna Satakheda, Kumara Ruddy, Nirmala Indi, Yankamma Goudagaon, Umabhai Gowli, and Hajappa Bhandari, among others.

NSS CAMP INSPIRES YOUTH TO SERVE: GAMBHARA

KALABURAGI

The annual NSS Camp at Godutai Doddappa Appa College emphasized selfless service, discipline, and leadership for young students. Inaugurating the event on Saturday, Dr. Mahesh Kumar Gambhara, Head of Sociology at VG Mahila Mahavidyalaya, explained that "NSS means I am ready to serve." He encouraged participants to adopt a service-oriented attitude and embrace the motto: "Not I, You."Dr. Gambhara said the camp aims to instill values such as cleanliness, punctuality, restraint, patriotism, and leadership. He expressed concern about today's youth wasting time on junk food and excessive mobile use, urging them to focus on meaningful activities that build character and contribute to society.Dr. Puttamani Devidas, Student Welfare Officer, highlighted Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj, stressing the importance of village development and equality among volunteers. He said every camper should serve others without discrimination.Dr. Seema Patila, principal of the college, encouraged students to understand the connection between healthy youth and a healthy nation.

MLA to lead awareness march on painkiller risks

PUTTUR

Puttur MLA Ashok Kumar Rai will lead a public awareness campaign titled "Quit Painkillers – Save Kidneys – Save Lives" on April 6 at 3:30 pm to address rising kidney ailments linked to indiscriminate medicine use.The event will begin with a march of school children from Darbe Circle to Bolwar, highlighting the dangers of consuming painkillers without medical supervision. The initiative comes in response to a noticeable increase in kidney disease cases in Puttur and surrounding areas, with studies pointing to overuse of painkillers as a major contributing factor.

NAME CHANGE

I, **PRAVEENA KUMAR**, S/o, Devaraju, Resident of No 36, M Gopahalli Manchegowdanapalya Ramanagar Dist, 562109, have changed my name to **PRAVEEN KUMAR**, vide affidavit dated: 05.04.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

IN THE COURT OF THE HONORABLE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT JUDGE, HOSUR
OS. NO: 82/2023

1. Narasamma, W/o. Late. Venkatesappa,
2. Ramachandrappa, S/o. Late. Venkatesappa,
3. Gowramma, D/o. Late. Venkatesappa,
4. Rathnamma, D/o. Late. Venkatesappa,
5. Sathyanarayanan, S/o. Late. Venkatesappa,
6. Maramma, D/o. Late. Venkatesappa,
7. Nanjappa @ Manjappa, S/o. Late. Venkatesappa,

All are residing at
M. Karapalli Village,
Muthali Panchayathu,
Hosur Taluk,
Krishnagiri District.

..... Plaintiffs

// versus //

D1) Krishnappa S/o. Giriyappa
D2) Ramasamy S/o. Giriyappa

1, 2 Defendants Residing at
Jadukanahalli Village,
Malur Taluk,
Bangalore District,
Karnataka State.

D10) M/s. Happy Farms and Resorts Pvt Ltd.,
Rep by its Manager,
D. No: 179/12,
2nd Cross Road,
Wilson Garden,
Hosur Road, Lalpark,
Bangalore District,
Karnataka State.

D11) Veenasaru W/o. Krishna
D. No: 1309, 28th Main Madhuresh,
24th Cross, 2nd Stage, Banashankari,
Bangalore District,
Karnataka State.

D12) Kajra W/o. B.S. Kajra,
D. No: 46A, 1st Floor, Lalpark,
Bangalore District,
Karnataka State.

D29) Mathiv Sekko
D. No: 1309, 28th Main Madhuresh,
24th Cross, 2nd Stage, Banasankari,
Bangalore District,
Karnataka State.

D32) Murugesan S/o. Krishnappa,
D. No: 4, 4th Cross, H9 Main,
Bommanahalli,
Bangalore District, Karnataka State.

... 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 29, 32 Defendants

NOTICE

The Plaintiff has filed the above suit for Partition and to declare the fraudulent documents of Defendants as null and Void. The above case is posted on 24.04.2026 for your appearance. On that day 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 29, 32 Defendants of you are appear directly or through your counsel for filing objection if any failing which the above case will be decided on merits in your absence.

Yours truly,
T. VEDI, B.A., LL.B.,
S. SARAVANAN, B.E., B.L.,
No. 26, Valluvan Nagar,
Ring Road, Hosur – 635109
Krishnagiri District.
Cell: 9751816245

TRAGEDY IN FIELD

FARMER'S DEATH BY SNAKE BITE SHOCKS VILLAGE

BIDAR

A tragic incident in Chintalagera village of Bidar South constituency has left the local community in grief. Farmer Vidyasagar lost his life after being bitten by a snake while working on his field. The news of his sudden death sent shockwaves across the village.

Upon learning of the incident, MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale visited Vidyasagar's family to offer condolences and personally provided financial assistance to support them in this difficult

time. The MLA assured the family that the government would take all necessary steps to provide further relief and support promptly.

"This is a painful reminder that farmers, who toil tirelessly to feed society, need our protection and care. Steps must be taken to prevent such accidents," Dr. Beldale said.

The local Grama Panchayat President Girish Kulkarni and community leaders including Shankaravara Kotaraki, Havashetty Patil, Jagadish Khooba, Chandrashekar Nitture, Krishna Bachche Gopala Reddy, Jagan Reddy, and Shivagonda were present during the visit. They expressed solidarity with the grieving family and stressed the importance of raising awareness about safety in fields and handling emergencies.The villagers prayed for the peace of Vidyasagar's soul and hoped his family finds the strength to bear this irreparable loss.

The incident has sparked conversations on ensuring timely medical help and preventive measures to avoid such tragedies in rural farming communities.

QUICK READ

Delhi crime branch busts medicine theft racket

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Crime Branch has uncovered a major racket diverting government hospital medicines meant for free distribution. Five accused, including a hospital insider, were arrested, and medicines worth approximately ₹70 lakh were recovered. The seized drugs, including Meropenem, Ceftriaxone, and Rabies Antiserum, are vital for treating serious conditions under government healthcare schemes. Investigators say the gang sold the medications for profit. In a separate crackdown on vehicle theft, two habitual auto-lifters were apprehended in Rohini, with 18 stolen two-wheelers, illegal arms, and other stolen items recovered under ACP Ramphool Meena's supervision.

Police bust milk theft gang, arrest two

NEW DELHI

Delhi police's Anti-Narcotics Squad has arrested two men, Mohit (alias Patha) and Ayush Maan Pandey (alias Pandit), for stealing milk and curd in Uttam Nagar. The gang reportedly followed delivery trucks, stealing crates for resale at local milk supply points. Police recovered 14 empty milk crates and a stolen three-wheeler. Mohit has a criminal history with 38 prior cases. The investigation was triggered by viral social media footage, and further details are awaited. This follows the recent bust of a separate racket diverting ₹70 lakh worth of government medicines for illegal sale.

INDIAN RAILWAYS HITS RECORD GROWTH IN FY26

Indian Railways achieved record freight and passenger growth in 2025-26, driven by Vande Bharat sleepers and expanded Kavach safety.

NEW DELHI

Indian Railways has officially capped off a historic year, reporting massive gains in both passenger travel and cargo movement for 2025-26.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced that the network is faster, safer, and more modern than ever before, marking a major milestone in India's journey toward a high-tech transport future.

The numbers tell a story of incredible scale. The railways moved a record 1,670 million tonnes of freight this year, keeping essential supplies like coal and food grains flowing across the country. On the passenger side, about 25,000 trains ran daily. The introduction of the new Vande Bharat Sleeper trains has been a game-changer, offering travelers a world-class, comfortable experience for long-distance overnight journeys.

Safety has also seen a digital revolution. The "Kavach" anti-collision system, which automatically stops trains to prevent accidents, is now active across 3,100 kilometers of track, with thousands more currently being upgraded. To make travel smoother, the government launched the "RailOne" app, a single platform where passengers can book tickets and track trains easily.

Infrastructure saw a big boost too, with 119 stations completely redesigned with modern amenities. New rail lines have finally connected remote areas like Aizawl in the Northeast and strengthened all-weather routes to Jammu & Kashmir.

By building over 1,600 new locomotives and thousands of modern coaches under the "Make in India" initiative, the railways are proving that the future of Indian travel is homegrown, efficient, and built to last.

Nine judge bench to review Sabarimala case

NEW DELHI

A nine-judge bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant is reviewing the Sabarimala case to balance religious traditions with equality.

The Supreme Court of India is set to revisit one of its most debated legal battles. A powerful nine-judge bench, led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, will begin hearings to review the Sabarimala temple entry case.

This high-stakes legal review aims to balance the scales between age-old religious traditions and the modern constitutional right to equality.

The controversy dates back to 2018, when the court famously ruled that women of all ages should be allowed to enter the Sree Dharma Sastha Temple. This decision ended a long-standing ban on women aged 10 to 50.

However, the ruling faced immediate pushback, leading a larger bench in 2019 to decide that the issue was part of a much broader conversation about how faith and the law interact in India.

The court isn't just looking at one temple. The upcoming hearings will likely impact other significant religious debates, such as women's entry into mosques and the rights of Parsi women married outside their faith.

The judges will have to decide on a tough question: how much power do courts have to change "essential religious practices" that communities have followed for centuries?

While the central government supports reviewing the 2018 verdict, the original petitioners argue that the progress made for women's dignity should not be undone.

As the arguments unfold throughout April, the nation watches closely. The final decision will define the future of religious freedom and equality for millions of citizens across various faiths.

Cops seize illegal poll kits in Kerala's Thrissur

THRISSUR

With the Kerala Legislative Assembly elections just days away, police have launched an investigation into the illegal distribution of household kits. The Thrissur West Police registered a case following a surprise raid by an election flying squad near the Olari Parthasarathy Temple.

Acting on a tip-off, an executive magistrate and his team intercepted the distribution at a local colony and a nearby supermarket.

While officials managed to seize 26 kits—each valued at approximately ₹900—further inquiries revealed a troubling detail, 75 kits had already been handed out to residents before the squad arrived.

Authorities have identified a individual named Radhakrishnan as the person allegedly behind the instructions for the handout. Under the Representation of the People Act, giving gifts or "inducements" to influence voters is strictly prohibited. Because these are specific legal violations, the police had to seek formal permission from a magistrate before officially filing the FIR.

Investigators are now working to trace the source of the funds and determine if any political candidates were directly involved in the scheme. The timing of the seizure is critical, as Kerala is set to head to the polls in a single phase on April 9, with results expected on May 4.

As the LDF, UDF, and NDA alliances enter the final stretch of their campaigns, election officials have promised "strict monitoring" across the state.

This crackdown serves as a stern warning that any attempt to buy votes will be met with immediate legal action to ensure a fair election.

Cash seizure sparks election tension in TN

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

A high-stakes raid in Tamil Nadu has uncovered nearly ₹11 lakh in cash, sparking fresh controversy just weeks before the state goes to the polls.

An election flying squad and Income Tax officials targeted the home of a local political figure, suspecting the money was meant to illegally influence voters.

The operation took place in Tiruchirappalli at the residence of a former Panchayat President and party functionary known as Gandhi, or Azhagappan. Acting on a specific tip-off, investigators searched the homes of Gandhi and his son, eventually recovering the large sum of money. The cash has since been handed over to election authorities, who are now tracing its origin to see if it was destined for the Srirangam Assembly constituency.

This seizure comes at a critical time, as Tamil Nadu prepares for a single-phase election on April 23. Enforcement teams across the state are currently on high alert, conducting frequent raids to prevent the use of "money power" in the democratic process.

Easter celebrated with pomp and gaiety

TIRUNELVELI

Thousands gather for Easter in Velankanni

Thousands of devotees gathered at the Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health in Velankanni as Easter celebrations began with special midnight prayers. The famous shrine, known as the "Rome of the East," witnessed large crowds from several southern states. The celebrations started with the Paschal Vigil.

Thousands of devotees gathered at the Sacred Heart Church in Udaiyarpatti, Tamil Nadu, to celebrate Easter Sunday with deep faith and vibrant joy. The atmosphere was filled with a sense of renewal as families arrived at dawn to participate in special prayers and the traditional Easter Mass.

Easter marks the most significant event in the Christian calendar: the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after his crucifixion. To symbolize this victory of light over darkness, the church lights were briefly dimmed before worshippers shared candlelight with one another. This powerful moment served as a visual reminder of unity and the beginning of a new chapter for the community.

The celebration was the culmination of the 40-day season of Lent, which began in February. During this time, believers practiced fasting and reflection, leading into "Holy Week," which honors the final days of Jesus's life. Parish Priest Michael Rasu led the congregation in renewing their baptismal vows, a traditional rite that many attendees described as a peaceful and deeply moving spiritual experience.

Beyond the formal rituals, the day was a heartfelt community gathering. From young children to elders, the "perisur" of the church was packed with people sharing greetings and gratitude.

Fuel shortage leaves Mandya auto drivers stranded

MANDYA

The streets of Mandya have fallen uncomfortably quiet as a severe LPG shortage forces hundreds of auto-rickshaws off the road. Drivers across the city are facing a desperate situation as local fuel bunkers hang "No Stock" signs on their gates, leaving the three-wheeled taxis that residents rely on parked and empty.

For most of these drivers, the auto-rickshaw is their only source of income. Without gas, they cannot earn the daily fares needed to buy food or pay off vehicle loans. Many have spent the last 24 hours camping outside closed stations, hoping a tanker might arrive. "We are living hand-to-mouth," one driver shared, expressing deep anxiety over how his family will survive if the dry spell continues.

Bunker staff admit they are in the dark, with no clear timeline on when the next shipment will reach Mandya. The crisis is linked to rising tensions in the Middle East, which have disrupted global shipping routes. To combat this, the Indian government has even deployed the Navy to escort fuel ships safely through volatile waters. While large tankers like the Green Sanvi have recently landed thousands of tonnes of LPG at Indian ports, the supply has yet to trickle down to local pumps. As the wait continues, drivers are calling for urgent government intervention. They warn that a prolonged shortage could push many families into a financial spiral. For now, the men who keep Mandya moving are stuck in a standstill, searching for odd jobs and praying for the "No Stock" signs to finally come down.

GAS SHORTAGE HITS DEHRADUN'S FAMOUS MAGGI STALLS

The iconic roadside Maggi points that line the scenic route to Mussoorie are facing a silent crisis. A severe shortage of commercial LPG cylinders has left local vendors struggling to serve the thousands of tourists who flock to these stalls daily. What used to be a quick, steaming bowl of noodles has now become a long wait, forcing many shopkeepers to ditch modern stoves for traditional wood fires. "We simply cannot keep up with the orders," explains Shanu Rana, a local stall owner. While the demand from hungry travelers remains high, the lack of fuel has caused footfall to drop sharply. Despite the rising cost of doing business and the extra labor of using firewood, most vendors are refusing to hike their prices, fearing they might lose their loyal customers for good.

Devotees throng Madurai temple for Panguni fest

MADURAI

The ancient streets of Thiruparankundram were transformed into a sea of orange and gold as thousands of pilgrims gathered at the iconic Murugan Temple.

The grand chariot procession, the heart of the annual Panguni festival, drew massive crowds from across Tamil Nadu to witness a tradition that has endured for centuries.

As the sun rose over the temple towers, the idols of Lord Murugan and Goddess Deivanai were ceremoniously placed upon a towering, intricately decorated wooden chariot. With thunderous chants of "Govinda" and "Vetrivel," devotees gripped the massive thick ropes to pull the temple car through the winding streets. The vibrant energy was palpable as the air filled with the scent of burning camphor and fresh jasmine garlands.

Panguni Uthiram is deeply significant in the Tamil Hindu calendar, marking the divine wedding of Lord Murugan and Goddess Valli. Occurring during the full moon of the month of Panguni, the day is believed to be the most auspicious time for divine unions, including those of Lord Shiva and Parvati. For many families present, the festival is a time to fulfill long-held vows and pray for a prosperous new year.

Local authorities worked tirelessly to manage the surge of people, ensuring that the procession moved safely through the packed corridors. Despite the sweltering heat, the mood remained one of peaceful devotion and communal harmony. As the chariot finally returned to its base, the successful celebration once again highlighted Madurai's status as the spiritual soul of the region.

ICY VISTA

Fresh snowfall turns Bhalesa into winter wonderland

BHALESA

A thick blanket of fresh snow has transformed the Bhalesa region in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir into a stunning winter landscape, though the beauty comes with a biting chill.

Following two days of heavy rain, the mercury plummeted as snow covered roads, rooftops, and the surrounding hills along the Himachal Pradesh border.

The sudden shift in weather has forced residents to quickly adapt. Dense fog and freezing winds have made the outdoors difficult, leading locals to rely on traditional heating methods like bukharis and kangris to stay warm. The India Meteorological Department had previously warned that two strong weather systems would hit northwest India this week, with conditions expected to intensify again around April 7.

While the scenery is picturesque, daily life has faced significant disruptions. Many areas are currently grappling with power outages and interrupted water supplies. Landslides and fallen trees have blocked key highways, restricting travel to emergency vehicles only. In response to the hazardous conditions, authorities in the Doda district have temporarily closed schools to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal has issued an urgent advisory, asking citizens to stay away from swollen rivers and slippery mountain paths. "The risk of accidents and flash flooding remains high," officials warned. While the region remains a "winter wonderland" for now, the focus remains on restoring essential services and ensuring public safety until the stormy weather finally clears.

QUICK READ

Over 6,000 UP workers safe in Israel conflict

Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh government confirmed that more than 6,000 workers from the state in conflict-hit Israel are safe. Authorities said there is currently no urgent demand from workers to return. The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) emphasized continuous monitoring and close coordination with Indian embassies, ready to arrange returns if needed. Recently, an Ambedkar Nagar worker stranded in Israel was safely brought back home following his family's appeal. Officials, under CM Yogi Adityanath's direction, are tracking the situation closely. Most workers have chosen to stay, while authorities ensure their safety amid ongoing tensions.

QR code helps police solve murder quickly

Agra

In a shocking case near Agra, police solved a murder within 24 hours thanks to a QR code on a liquor bottle. Victim Lokendra went missing on April 1, and his partially burnt body was found by the roadside. Scanning the QR code revealed where the bottle was bought, leading police to CCTV footage and two suspects, Mahesh and Dharamveer. Investigation showed Lokendra's wife had plotted his murder with her lover. The trio was arrested quickly. Authorities credited digital evidence and swift police action for cracking the case in just one day.

Delhi police detain UP youth in terror probe

Kushinagar

Delhi Police's Special Cell detained Rizwan Ahmed, a youth from Padrauna, Kushinagar, on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities. He was taken to Delhi after his arrest, and authorities seized his mobile, laptop, and other devices for investigation. Officials said incriminating material was found, and his past links with ISIS are under scrutiny. Ahmed had previously been jailed in Mumbai from 2017 to 2023 over terror-related cases. The UP Police are also examining his family and contacts. The arrest comes amid broader anti-terror operations in the state targeting modules with alleged foreign handlers.

Over 51 lakh LPG cylinders delivered daily

New Delhi

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas reported that over 51 lakh LPG cylinders were delivered across India on April 4, with no dry-out at distributors. Online bookings have reached 95%, and delivery authentication codes (DAC) now cover 90% of cylinder deliveries. Smaller 5 kg cylinders are also widely available without address proof. The government urged citizens to avoid panic buying and use digital bookings. PNG connections are expanding rapidly, with over 3.6 lakh households connected since March. Refineries are running at high capacity, ensuring sufficient LPG, petrol, and diesel stocks, while alternative fuels are recommended to conserve energy.

New highway plan protects wildlife, growth

MP's "Tiger Corridor" is receiving a ₹758 crore upgrade, featuring specialized wildlife underpasses to balance highway development with conservation.

BHOPAL

The famous "Tiger Corridor" in Madhya Pradesh is getting a major high-tech makeover.

The Central Government has sanctioned ₹758 crore to transform a 22-km stretch of the Itarsi-Betul section into a modern four-lane highway.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav praised the move, noting it will bridge the gap between northern and southern states by linking Betul directly to Nagpur.

While the road is built for speed, safety remains the top priority, not just for drivers but for the region's famous tigers. The project includes 11 specialized underpasses and overpasses designed specifically for wildlife. These "green bridges" will allow animals to cross the busy highway without the risk of accidents, preserving the delicate balance of the surrounding forests while allowing traffic to flow smoothly.

The economic impact is expected to be massive. The region is rich in natural resources like coal, copper, and graphite, and the wider road will slash transportation times for these goods. Local farmers will also find it much easier to get their produce to bigger markets, boosting rural incomes. Additionally, the upgrade is set to spark a surge in eco-tourism for the nearby Satpura Tiger Reserve and Ratapani sanctuary.

Once finished, this project will complete a continuous four-lane route from Gwalior to Betul. By making hilly stretches safer and travel times shorter, the government aims to turn this corridor into a lifeline for regional development. For residents and travelers alike, the new highway promises a future where nature and progress can finally move forward together.

TOLL BOOTHS TO GO CASHLESS FROM APRIL 10

NEW DELHI

India is officially pulling the plug on cash payments at national highway toll plazas beginning April 10.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways announced this bold move to erase long queues, stop arguments at booths, and speed up travel for everyone.

Under the new rules, the days of handing over paper money are over. Drivers must now use a FASTag to pay the standard rate. If you don't have a working tag, you can still pay using UPI, but there is a catch, you will be charged 1.25 times the normal fee. This replaces the old system where cash users were forced to pay double the amount.

What happens if your UPI fails or your FASTag is empty? The government has introduced a digital safety net called "unpaid user fee" notices. If a vehicle passes through without paying, the owner will receive an electronic notice via SMS or email. If you pay this bill online within 72 hours, you only pay the standard toll with no extra penalty.

However, procrastination will be costly. If the bill remains unpaid after 72 hours, the fee doubles. If you ignore the notice for more than 15 days, the debt will be logged into the national "VAHAN" system. This could lead to strict restrictions on your vehicle's documentation or registration. By moving to a fully digital system, the government aims to make highway journeys smoother, faster, and more transparent for millions of commuters.

Kannur district will deploy cameras across 2,177 polling booths to prevent fraud and ensure fair, transparent Kerala elections

Eyes everywhere as booths in Kerala's Kannur go digital

KANNUR

In a massive bid to stop voting fraud, authorities in Kannur have announced that every single polling booth in the district will be under 100% camera surveillance.

For the upcoming Kerala Assembly elections, all 2,177 stations will feature live webcasting, allowing officials to monitor everything from voter queues to the actual voting process in real-time.

This high-tech watchdog system is being run from a central control room at the Kannur Collectorate. Specially trained teams will watch the feeds from all 11 constituencies, including Dharmadam and Thalassery, ensuring that no illegal activity goes unnoticed. Every second of footage is being recorded onto hard disks, providing a permanent digital trail that will later be handed over to the State Chief Electoral Officer.

The move comes at a tense time for the state. Just recently, police in Thrissur had to step in after an election squad caught people illegally handing out household kits worth ₹900 each to influence poor voters. By putting every booth under the lens, officials hope to prevent similar "gifts" or any form of intimidation from ruining the democratic process.

With the single-phase election set for April 9, the battle between the LDF, UDF, and NDA is reaching a fever pitch. However, for the voters of Kannur, the message from the government is clear, your vote is private but the process is being watched. These "digital eyes" aim to guarantee that when the results come out on May 4, they truly reflect the will of the people.

HEAVY RAIN, STORMS HIT INDIAN STATES

NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department has issued a fresh warning as heavy rain lashes parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Over the last twenty-four hours, these regions saw significant downpours, with some areas recording up to 11 cm of rain. Experts say this is just the beginning of a very busy weather week for the country.

A major weather pattern called a "western disturbance" is moving into northwest India. This will bring intense storms, especially on April 7 and 8. People living in the Kashmir Valley should prepare for heavy falls. Meanwhile, the Northeast will likely stay wet for the next few days. States like Assam and Meghalaya are expected to see heavy rain and strong winds as the week progresses.

The south is also on high alert. Places like Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh are expected to face lightning and gusty winds. Farmers and travelers in these areas are being told to watch out for sudden changes in the sky.

Up north, the weather remains unstable. High-altitude spots in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand might see a mix of rain and snow. In flatter regions like Punjab and Rajasthan, experts are worried about hailstorms and winds reaching speeds of up to 70 kmph. These powerful winds can knock down trees and damage crops. Officials are urging everyone to stay safe indoors during lightning and to keep an eye on local weather updates as these storms move across the nation.

Huge forest loss sparks heated green debate

GADCHIROLI

A massive iron ore project in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district has sparked a fierce row over forest loss and tribal rights. The government recently approved clearing 937 hectares of lush woodland in the Bhamragad Reserve. This area serves as a vital home for tigers, leopards, and rare giant squirrels, connecting two major national tiger reserves.

To make up for this loss, officials plan to plant trees 1,000 kilometers away in Ratnagiri. However, experts are sounding the alarm. They point out that the replacement land is split into 23 tiny, scattered patches. Even more concerning, much of that land is already covered in thick trees. Critics argue that planting new trees on existing forest land does not truly replace what is being destroyed in Gadchiroli.

The two regions also have completely different climates. Gadchiroli is dry, while Ratnagiri is a wet, tropical coastal zone. Experts like Sharachchandra Lele call the plan "untenable," stating that a single, large ecosystem cannot be replaced by fragmented bits in a different environment.

Local tribal communities are also caught in the crossfire. Over 15,000 Gond and Madia people live nearby. While the mining company claims no tribal rights exist there, activists insist that local village councils must give their consent under the law.

The company promises to follow all environmental rules and invest in wildlife protection. Still, the project highlights a deep struggle in India, how to balance industrial growth with the urgent need to protect nature and indigenous voices.

Emergency floats inactive in Andaman helicopter crash

PORT BLAIR

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) reported that emergency floats on a Pawan Hans helicopter were inactive when it crash-landed into the sea near Mayabunder on February 24, killing one passenger. The Airbus AS365N3 carried 10 passengers, including two infants. The floats, required by DGCA-approved procedures, were not armed, causing the helicopter to topple onto its side upon water impact. Crew members evacuated passengers safely, most were hospitalized and later discharged. The AAIB recommended stricter compliance with safety protocols, including seat restraints, life jackets, and pilot awareness to arm floats during operations.

'Judges must decide cases without using AI'

AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court has officially banned judges from using Artificial Intelligence to make legal decisions or write verdicts.

A new policy released clarifies that while technology can help with office work, the "human mind" must remain the sole authority in the courtroom.

The court stated that key tasks—like weighing evidence, interpreting laws, and deciding on bail or sentencing—cannot be handed over to machines. This move ensures that judges stay personally responsible for every order issued in their names. The policy specifically forbids using AI to draft judgments or evaluate the honesty of witnesses.

This strict stance follows a warning from the Supreme Court after a lower court cited "fake" judgments created by AI. To prevent such errors, the Gujarat High Court now requires that any AI-generated legal research or citations be double-checked against official law books.

There are also major privacy concerns. The court has strictly barred staff from typing confidential data, such as witness addresses or private health records, into public AI tools. The policy warns that technology can "hallucinate" or show bias, which could threaten the fairness of the legal system.

However, the court isn't ignoring technology entirely. AI can still be used for basic tasks like scheduling hearings, translating documents, and transcribing spoken words in court. Even then, humans must verify the results. Any official who breaks these rules could face serious disciplinary action, proving that in the halls of justice, a computer is no match for a judge.

COPS BREAK THE RING

Amritsar police bust drone heroin network

AMRITSAR

In a major blow to cross-border drug trafficking, the Amritsar Commissionerate Police have dismantled a sophisticated smuggling ring that used drones to drop narcotics into India.

During a high-stakes operation, officers arrested two men and seized 4.13 kilograms of heroin, cutting off a primary supply chain running through Punjab's Majha and Doaba regions.

The two suspects, 22-year-old Atish Suman and 28-year-old Sukhwinder (alias Sunder), were reportedly the local faces of a much larger international conspiracy. Police revealed that the duo was in constant contact with handlers based in Europe and operatives currently serving time in Indian jails. Together, they coordinated drone deliveries from Pakistan, bringing illegal consignments across the border under the cover of night.Amritsar Police Commissioner Gurpreet Singh Bhullar stated that both men have extensive criminal records and were key players in the state's drug distribution network. "This operation disrupts a major drone-based supply chain," Commissioner Bhullar said, noting that the arrests prevent a significant amount of poison from reaching local communities.

The crackdown is part of a massive anti-drug campaign in 2026. So far this year, Amritsar police have:

- Registered 488 cases under the NDPS Act.
- Made 840 arrests related to drug trafficking.
- Recovered over 31 kilograms of heroin.
- Seized more than Rs 18 lakh in illicit drug money.

While these arrests are a significant victory, the investigation is far from over. Authorities are now working to track down the remaining members of the network and have urged residents to stay vigilant. The police reiterated their "zero-tolerance" policy, vowing to continue operations until every illicit channel in the region is dismantled.

ENGINEERS ACQUITTED AFTER 34-YEAR BRIBERY BATTLE

NEW DELHI

In a powerful reminder that justice relies on evidence rather than suspicion, the Delhi High Court has acquitted two engineers, VK Datta and Dinesh Garg, ending a legal nightmare that lasted more than three decades. The pair had been accused of demanding a bribe of just ₹1,800 back in 1991.

The case began 34 years ago when the CBI claimed the two engineers—an Assistant Engineer and a Junior Engineer—demanded money to clear pending bills for a contractor. Following a "trap" operation, they were arrested and eventually convicted by a trial court in 2002. However, the engineers refused to give up, maintaining their innocence through years of appeals.

The High Court's recent review uncovered massive holes in the original story. Records showed that at the exact time the bribe was supposedly demanded, both men were actually working at a completely different site. Furthermore, a key witness testified that there weren't even any payments due to the contractor at that time, meaning the engineers had no reason to ask for a bribe in the first place.

The judge was firm in the ruling, simply finding money on someone isn't enough to prove a "demand" for a bribe. The court pointed out that "suspicion cannot replace evidence," and criticized the original investigation for ignoring crucial witnesses. By setting aside the 2002 conviction, the court has finally cleared the names of Datta and Garg, closing a chapter that spanned nearly their entire professional lives.

US rescues downed airman as Iran conflict intensifies

The rescue operation comes amid escalating tensions and a deepening global crisis, triggered by prolonged West Asia conflict.

WASHINGTON

The United States has successfully rescued an airman who was stranded behind enemy lines after Iran shot down his F-15 fighter jet, marking a significant development in the ongoing war between the two nations.

The operation comes amid escalating tensions and a deepening global crisis triggered by the prolonged conflict.

According to U.S. officials, the daring rescue mission was carried out early Sunday, bringing relief to the administration of Donald Trump as the war with Iran entered its sixth week.

The rescued airman was one of two crew members aboard the F-15 fighter jet that Iran claimed to have shot down using its air defense systems on Friday. The incident had prompted an urgent and high-profile search operation involving both nations.

The successful extraction of the injured airman is being viewed as a rare positive moment for the United States in a conflict that has already claimed thousands of lives. The war has also triggered a severe energy crisis, largely due to Iran's near closure of the strategically critical Strait of Hormuz. This waterway is essential for global energy supply, typically facilitating the transport of nearly one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas.

In response to the escalating situation, President Trump, along with Israeli leadership, intensified pressure on Iran to reopen the strait. The United States warned that failure to comply could result in targeted attacks on Iranian energy infrastructure. Further raising the stakes, Trump has issued a deadline for Iran to agree to a peace deal by Monday, signaling a potential turning point in the conflict.

In an official statement shared by White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, Trump described the rescue as one of the most daring Search and Rescue Operations in U.S. history. The operation underscores the high-risk military efforts underway as both sides continue to navigate an increasingly volatile and globally consequential conflict.

Iran claims destruction of US aircraft during rescue mission

DUBAI

According to officials from Iran, the incident occurred during a U.S. mission to retrieve a downed airman whose F-15 fighter jet had been shot down on Friday. Iranian authorities stated that their forces engaged multiple U.S. aircraft involved in the operation, leading to significant losses.

A spokesperson for Iran's unified command of armed forces claimed that two C-130 military transport aircraft and two Black Hawk helicopters belonging to the United States were destroyed during the mission. In addition, separate statements from the Iranian army and the Revolutionary Guards alleged that an Israeli Hermes-900 drone and a U.S. MQ-9 drone were also shot down in Isfahan province.

However, these claims have not been independently verified. Reuters reported that it could not immediately confirm the accuracy of the Iranian accounts, leaving uncertainty over the extent of the reported losses.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials indicated that the rescue mission itself was successful. According to reports, the second airman from the downed F-15 jet was safely recovered late Saturday, following the earlier rescue of the first crew member. The operation marked a critical development in the ongoing war between the United States and Iran, which continues to escalate with each passing day.

Iranian media outlets, including the semi-official Fars news agency, reported that U.S. search and rescue operations were conducted across multiple regions. These included Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad, and Isfahan provinces, suggesting a wide operational footprint during the mission.

The incident highlights the increasing intensity of military engagements between the two nations, with both sides reporting conflicting accounts. As the situation unfolds, the international community remains on edge, watching closely for further developments in a conflict that carries significant geopolitical and economic implications.

Lebanese soldier killed in Israeli strike

GAZA

The Lebanese army confirmed that one of its soldiers was killed in an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon, marking another escalation in tensions along the volatile border region.

According to a statement from the Lebanese Army, the soldier lost his life on Sunday when Israeli forces carried out a strike targeting an area in southern Lebanon. The army did not immediately provide further details regarding the exact location or circumstances of the attack.

The incident comes amid ongoing hostilities between Israel and armed groups operating in southern Lebanon, a region that has frequently witnessed cross-border clashes. While the Lebanese army is not typically a direct participant in these confrontations, it operates in the same areas where tensions often flare, increasing the risk to its personnel.

Officials have yet to clarify whether the strike specifically targeted military infrastructure or was part of broader operations in the region. The killing of a Lebanese soldier raises concerns about the potential widening of the conflict and the involvement of state forces.

Southern Lebanon has remained a sensitive flashpoint for years, with intermittent exchanges of fire and military actions contributing to instability. Incidents such as this further heighten fears of escalation, particularly as regional tensions continue to rise.

The Lebanese army stated that investigations into the strike are ongoing, while the situation on the ground remains tense. International observers continue to monitor developments closely, as any further escalation could have serious implications for regional security.

China executes French national convicted in drug trafficking case

BEIJING

China has confirmed the execution of a French national who had been sentenced to death for drug trafficking, sparking criticism from France over concerns about legal rights and judicial procedures.

The development has once again highlighted China's strict enforcement of anti-drug laws and its stance on capital punishment.

Authorities in China announced on Sunday that a 62-year-old French citizen, Chan Thao Phoumy, had been executed after spending nearly two decades in prison. The confirmation came through a statement issued by the Chinese embassy in France, which emphasized that China does not discriminate against defendants based on nationality and applies its laws equally to all.

The execution follows criticism from the French government, which expressed concern over the legal handling of the case. France's foreign ministry stated that it particularly regretted that Chan's legal defence team was not permitted to attend the final court hearing, calling it a violation of his fundamental rights.

Chan, who was born in Guangzhou but later became a naturalised French citizen, was initially arrested in 2005 as part of a large-scale crackdown on drug trafficking. He was among 89 suspects detained in connection with a significant drug operation. In 2007, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, but his punishment was later escalated.

In 2010, a court in Guangzhou sentenced him to death for his involvement in a criminal network responsible for producing, transporting, and distributing large quantities of crystal methamphetamine. The operation was reportedly valued at around 100 million yuan, equivalent to approximately 15 million U.S. dollars.

China is known for its strict stance on drug-related crimes and is considered one of the world's toughest enforcers of anti-narcotics laws. While executions of foreign nationals are relatively rare, they do occur in cases involving large-scale trafficking. The country does not publicly disclose detailed statistics on executions, adding to international concerns about transparency.

The case has further strained diplomatic sensitivities, as debates continue over human rights, legal representation, and the use of capital punishment in cross-border criminal cases.

Explosives found near Serbia-Hungary gas pipeline

BUDAPEST

Explosives described as having devastating power were discovered near the TurkStream gas pipeline in Serbia, raising serious concerns about the safety of critical energy infrastructure in Europe. Leaders from Serbia and Hungary confirmed the development, which comes at a politically sensitive time ahead of Hungary's upcoming national elections.

The alarming discovery was disclosed following communication between Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. According to official statements, Serbian security forces identified a powerful explosive device near the TurkStream pipeline, a key route for transporting Russian natural gas across the Balkans into Central and Eastern Europe.

President Vucic stated that specialized units on the ground had located the explosive during routine security operations. He described the device as having immense destructive capability, raising fears that it could have caused severe damage if detonated. While authorities have not yet confirmed whether the explosives were part of a planned sabotage attempt, investigations are ongoing to determine their origin, intent, and any possible links to organized groups.

The TurkStream pipeline plays a crucial role in Europe's energy network, supplying gas to several countries, including Hungary. Any disruption to its operations could have far-reaching economic and political consequences, particularly at a time when energy security remains a top priority across the region.

Giuffre family urges King Charles to meet Epstein survivors in US

LONDON

The family of Virginia Giuffre, a prominent accuser in the Jeffrey Epstein case, has called on Britain's King Charles to meet survivors of sexual abuse during his upcoming state visit to the United States.

The appeal comes as the visit coincides with the anniversary of Giuffre's death, adding emotional weight to their request.

In a statement shared with media organizations, Giuffre's relatives, Sky and Amanda Roberts, urged King Charles III to engage directly with survivors and listen to their experiences. They noted that the timing of the visit falls just two days after the one-year anniversary of Giuffre's death, which they described as a deeply significant and painful moment for the family.

Virginia Giuffre had been one of the most well-known accusers linked to the late financier Jeffrey Epstein, whose case exposed a global network of alleged sexual exploitation and trafficking. Giuffre had accused Epstein of trafficking her to several powerful individuals, including the king's younger brother, Prince Andrew, when she was 17 years old.

In their statement, Giuffre's family expressed appreciation for the king's previous actions regarding the allegations. They acknowledged that he had taken decisive steps in response to the accusations, including removing Prince Andrew from royal duties and stripping him of certain titles. However, they emphasized that more direct engagement with survivors would demonstrate continued commitment to justice and accountability.

We strongly urge King Charles to meet with us and survivors and hear what we have to say, the family stated, highlighting the importance of giving survivors a platform to share their voices at the highest level.

Buckingham Palace has not issued an official response to the request. Palace officials have previously maintained that the monarch cannot become directly involved in matters that are subject to ongoing investigations, particularly those connected to allegations of sexual abuse involving Epstein and his associates.

The renewed call underscores the lasting impact of the Epstein case and the continued demands from survivors and their families for recognition, accountability, and systemic change. As the state visit approaches, attention is likely to focus on whether the king will respond to the appeal and how the issue will shape public discourse during the trip.

LAY DOWN WEAPONS

Pope Leo calls for global peace in Easter message

VATICAN CITY

In his Easter message delivered at St. Peter's Square, Pope Leo made a powerful appeal to global leaders to end ongoing conflicts and reject ambitions of power and domination.

Addressing thousands of faithful, the pope emphasized the urgent need for peace in a world increasingly desensitized to violence. Speaking during the traditional Urbi et Orbi blessing at St. Peter's Square, Pope Leo urged those in positions of authority to take immediate steps toward peace.

He called on leaders worldwide to abandon any pursuit of conquest or control, stressing that such ambitions only deepen suffering and instability.

In his address, the pope expressed concern that societies are becoming increasingly indifferent to violence. He warned that repeated exposure to conflict risks normalizing war and eroding compassion. Let those who have weapons lay them down, he said, urging decision-makers to choose diplomacy over destruction. His message, though brief, carried a direct and urgent tone.

Pope Leo, noted as the first pope from the United States, has been an outspoken critic of ongoing global conflicts, including tensions involving Iran. However, in this particular message, he refrained from naming specific wars, instead focusing on a broader moral appeal to humanity.

Reflecting on the significance of Easter, the pope highlighted the story of Jesus Christ, who, according to Christian belief, rose from the dead after accepting crucifixion without resistance. He described Christ as entirely nonviolent, presenting him as a model for resolving conflict through peace and sacrifice rather than aggression.

The pope called on believers and leaders alike to use the occasion of Easter as a moment of reflection and renewal. On this day of celebration, let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination, and power, he urged, appealing for collective efforts to bring peace to a world deeply affected by war.

His message resonated strongly with the gathered crowd and global audiences, reinforcing the Vatican's longstanding call for dialogue, reconciliation, and an end to violence.

Quick Read

Planet Labs halts satellite imagery of Iran conflict after US request

Moscow

Satellite imaging company Planet Labs has announced that it will indefinitely stop sharing visuals of Iran and surrounding conflict zones, following a request from the United States government. The move reflects growing sensitivity around intelligence and security concerns amid escalating tensions in the Middle East. The California-based firm Planet Labs confirmed the decision in a communication sent to its customers, stating that it would comply fully with the directive issued by U.S. authorities. According to the company, the government has asked all satellite imagery providers to suspend the distribution of images related to the ongoing conflict region, particularly areas involving Iran. Planet Labs, known for its extensive network of Earth-observing satellites, provides high-resolution imagery used by governments, researchers, and private organizations worldwide.

Fuel leak, refinery fire hit Russian energy units amid drone attacks

Moscow

Russia reported a fuel leak at its Baltic Sea port of Primorsk and a fire at the NORSI oil refinery following a drone attack, highlighting growing pressure on the country's energy infrastructure. The incidents come as Ukraine intensifies strikes targeting Russia's key sources of revenue. Authorities in Russia confirmed on Sunday that a fuel leak occurred at the port of Primorsk, one of the country's major oil export hubs. The leak was reportedly linked to damage to a pipeline, according to Leningrad region governor Alexander Drozdenko, who initially stated that infrastructure at the site had been compromised. In a separate incident, a fire broke out at the NORSI oil refinery after what officials described as a drone attack. While details about the scale of the damage remain limited, the incident underscores increasing vulnerabilities in Russia's energy sector amid ongoing hostilities.

SUDOKU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	9		3		4	8		7
8		4		1			3	6
	2		8		5	4		
4		9		3			7	5
	6		7		1	9		
7		3		2			4	1
	4		1		3	7		
1		8		9			6	4
	3		4		6	1		

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

7	5	8	3	9	1	1	4	6
6	4	2	1	5	8	9	7	3
1	9	3	4	7	6	2	8	5
3	2	6	9	8	4	7	5	1
9	1	4	7	2	5	3	6	8
5	8	7	6	1	3	4	2	9
4	7	9	5	6	1	8	3	2
2	3	5	8	4	9	6	1	7
8	6	1	2	3	7	5	9	4

QUICK READ

Amul crosses ₹1L crore mark, reports 11% growth

New Delhi

India's dairy giant Amul has achieved a major milestone, with its brand turnover crossing ₹1 lakh crore for the first time, marking an 11% growth over the previous year. The cooperative, known for milk, butter, cheese, and other dairy products, has steadily expanded its domestic and international footprint. Analysts attribute this growth to rising demand for packaged dairy products, innovative marketing, and robust supply chain management. Amul's success also reflects the strength of India's cooperative model in empowering farmers. The company plans to continue investing in technology, product diversification, and global expansion to sustain its growth trajectory in the competitive dairy market.

OPEC+ considers oil output hike amid supply disruptions

New Delhi

OPEC+ is expected to consider approving an oil output increase at its meeting this Sunday as global energy markets face pressure from a major supply disruption. The proposed increase would likely be modest and may exist mainly "on paper," since key producers are struggling to boost actual production amid the ongoing U.S.–Israeli war with Iran, which has effectively closed the crucial Strait of Hormuz and cut millions of barrels per day from global supply. While the move could signal readiness to raise production once conditions improve, analysts say the immediate impact on supplies will be limited and prices remain elevated.

India's pharma exports maintain growth momentum

New Delhi

India's pharmaceutical exports continued their growth trajectory in the last financial year, with shipments reaching over $28 billion till February, up about 5.6 % compared with the same period last year, according to Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL) data. Despite global economic headwinds and pricing pressures, demand remained strong for formulations, biologicals, vaccines and AYUSH products, reflecting steady global appetite for Indian medicines. The sector, currently valued at around $60 billion, is projected to more than double to $130 billion by 2030, highlighting long term export growth potential.

Stock markets end week lower, major firms hurt

New Delhi

India's stock market finished the holiday shortened week in the red, with broad based selling hitting major indices and wiping out significant market value. The BSE Sensex fell about 263.67 points (0.35%) while the NSE Nifty declined around 106.5 points (0.46%) over the week, reflecting weak investor sentiment. Six of the top 10 most valued companies saw their combined market capitalization shrink by ₹64,734.46 crore, with Bharti Airtel among the biggest laggards. The downturn underscored cautious trading conditions amid lingering economic and geopolitical concerns as traders assessed risk ahead of the next full trading week.

Geopolitics now drives global trade more than economics

The crisis in West Asia, coupled with ongoing global conflicts and rivalries, has made traditional risk mitigation tools insufficient.

NEW DELHI

Geopolitical tensions — especially the ongoing crisis in West Asia — are increasingly shaping global trade flows, overtaking traditional economic factors such as cost competitiveness and demand, experts say.

As instability grows around strategic maritime corridors like the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, businesses are confronting unprecedented risks that go beyond commercial fundamentals, forcing them to rethink risk management and supply chain strategies.

Analysts note that nearly 80% of global trade by volume moves by sea, making disruptions in key shipping routes particularly damaging. Heightened geopolitical risk has led to surging freight rates — reportedly up 30–50% on some routes — and delays as long as two weeks, adding cost and uncertainty to cross border logistics. These developments have highlighted the limitations of traditional trade models that prioritize economic efficiency over political stability.

In this new environment, political risk insurance (PRI) is gaining prominence. Industry leaders say that while insurance used to be a protective safeguard, it is now essential for companies operating in politically sensitive regions because it helps manage risks like sovereign actions, sanctions, and political violence. Firms that once treated PRI as optional are now making it a core part of their strategy to ensure business continuity.

Experts assert that geopolitical uncertainty has reshaped how global trade is

financed, insured, and executed, especially for firms engaging with markets in emerging regions.

As trade flows intersect more frequently with contested geographies, managing geopolitical risk has become a strategic imperative rather than a peripheral concern. With little immediate resolution to current global tensions, the demand for structured risk solutions is expected to remain strong, fundamentally altering global trade dynamics in an era defined by political uncertainty.

OMCs to pay discounted rates to refineries amid Mideast crisis

NEW DELHI

In a first since fuel price deregulation, Indian state run oil marketing companies (OMCs) have decided to pay discounted rates to refineries for key fuels like petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel (ATF), and kerosene, to limit mounting financial losses.

This move comes as crude oil prices have surged sharply due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, pushing global prices above $100 per barrel, while domestic retail fuel prices in India have remained frozen.

Under this unprecedented step, OMCs such as Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) will pay refineries discounted transfer prices — up to Rs 60 per litre below import parity cost — effective from mid March. This effectively reduces the cost at which OMCs buy fuel from refiners, helping them absorb losses from selling petrol and diesel at unchanged retail rates despite rising crude costs.

The decision reflects increased pressure on state run firms, which else face widening under recoveries because petrol and diesel prices have been unchanged since April 2022. While integrated OMCs can partly offset this burden between refining and marketing margins, independent refiners such as Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL), Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd (CPCL), and HPCL Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL) could be hit harder due to limited marketing reach.

Indian state-owned oil companies have decided to reduce the prices they pay refineries for petrol, diesel, and other fuels; this proactive strategy targets the financial strain caused by fixed retail fuel prices.

Traditionally, refinery transfer pricing was based on import parity until 2006, but fuel price deregulation since 2010 14 meant prices reflected market dynamics. This new move marks a rare departure as OMCs adjust internal pricing to manage financial stress rather than pass rising costs to consumers.

Overall, the strategy shows the growing strain on India's fuel sector amid volatile global oil markets and government policy to keep retail prices steady.

If you want, I can also provide a headline and short blurb for this news.

Kandla Port handled a record 160.11 million tonnes in FY26 and advanced sustainability by conducting India's first methanol bunkering trial, boosting green maritime initiatives.

Kandla Port logs record cargo handling, pushes green bunkering

NEW DELHI

Deendayal Port Authority — formerly known as Kandla Port — achieved a landmark performance in the 2025 26 financial year by handling a record 160.11 million tonnes (MMT) of cargo, reclaiming the top spot among India's major ports.

This marks a significant 7% year on year increase over FY25 and surpasses the throughput of other major ports such as Paradip, which reported 156.45 MMT in the same period.

The surge in volumes was driven by strong gains across multiple cargo segments. Container traffic jumped sharply, fertiliser shipments rose substantially, and liquid cargo and iron & steel volumes also saw healthy growth. Although some segments like timber, salt, crude and coal saw modest declines, overall diversification and operational resilience helped the port achieve its historic figures.

On the sustainability front, Deendayal Port is advancing India's green transition in maritime trade. It recently conducted India's first shore to ship methanol bunkering trial, signalling a push toward cleaner marine fuels. This trial, carried out in collaboration with shipping partners and energy firms, demonstrates the port's readiness to supply methanol as an alternative fuel for vessels — a key step in reducing shipping emissions. Plans are underway to position the port as a Green Methanol Bunkering Hub, with anticipated larger scale supply operations by 2028 under national green energy initiatives.

The port's combined achievements highlight its growing role in national logistics and trade infrastructure. High cargo throughput underscores operational efficiency and robust trade demand, while early adoption of green fuel trials positions the port as a leader in sustainable maritime solutions.

Global GDP slashed, inflation pressures rise amid crisis

NEW DELHI

Global economic growth is on track for downward revisions amid escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia, according to a recent SBI Research report, released ahead of India's upcoming Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting.

The report highlights that although global GDP forecasts have not yet been officially revised, a downward revision now appears imminent due to persistent disruptions in energy markets and supply chains caused by the conflict. This evolving situation is expected to slow global growth and drive up inflation pressures worldwide.

SBI Research warns that ongoing conflicts, particularly around key energy routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, have significantly disrupted oil supplies, marking some of the largest energy market disturbances since the 1970s. These disruptions are feeding into broader price instability, with inflation likely to accelerate as higher energy and metal costs pass through to consumer prices. If the conflict persists, the risk of stagflation — stagnant growth paired with rising inflation — could intensify in 2026.

While overall global growth for now remains modest — estimated at around 3.2% — India is expected to remain relatively resilient with a projected 7.2% growth in FY27. However, the report notes serious headwinds, including trade disruptions and financial market volatility that could weigh on future projections.

For India specifically, elevated global crude prices — stubbornly above $100 per barrel — have contributed to rising imported inflation and a weaker rupee, which could keep consumer inflation elevated above 4.5% in coming quarters. The SBI Research report underscores continued macroeconomic uncertainty and heightened inflationary risks stemming from geopolitical strains and energy market pressures.

Amid Mehli's challenge, Venu quits Tata trust

NEW DELHI

Venu Srinivasan, chairman emeritus of Venu Srinivasan and a prominent figure in the automotive industry, has stepped down from his position on the board of the Bai Hirabai Jamsetji Tata Navsari Charitable Institution (BHI), a charitable trust affiliated with the Tata Trusts network.

The trust, founded in 1923, focuses on community welfare initiatives, particularly in education and healthcare for the Parsi community in Navsari. Srinivasan, who also serves as vice chairman and trustee of several Tata Trust entities, cited his other business commitments as the reason for his resignation.

His departure comes amid an ongoing governance dispute involving former trustee Mehli Mistry, who filed a challenge to Srinivasan's eligibility as a trustee. Mistry contended that the trust deed requires trustees to be of Zoroastrian faith and permanent residents of Mumbai, criteria he argued Srinivasan and another trustee, Vijay Singh, do not satisfy. This legal challenge was submitted to the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner, prompting scrutiny of trustee qualifications under the trust's founding deed.

While Srinivasan's resignation is officially attributed to professional commitments, observers note that it adds a new dimension to widening tensions within the Tata Trusts' governance framework — one of India's most influential philanthropic and corporate governance structures. His exit as a trustee arrives at a time when internal debates over eligibility norms and governance transparency have intensified, raising questions about oversight and leadership in charitable institutions linked to major corporate groups.

Srinivasan is widely known for his leadership in the auto sector, notably with TVS Motor Company, and for his roles across multiple boards of industry bodies and philanthropic institutions.

RBI likely to hold repo rate at 5.25% amid inflation risks

NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), led by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, is scheduled to meet from April 6 to 8, 2026, marking the first policy review of the new fiscal year 2026-27.

The meeting comes amid rising global uncertainty due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, surging crude oil prices, a weakening rupee, and potential disruptions in energy supplies.

These factors have intensified volatility in global markets, raising concerns over imported inflation, currency pressures, and energy security for India.

SBI Research expects the RBI to maintain a status quo on policy rates in the upcoming meeting. The report notes that crude oil prices have surged above $100 per barrel, one of the most significant disruptions since the 1973 oil crisis, largely due to tensions around the Strait of Hormuz.

Domestically, the rupee has weakened past ₹93 per US dollar, while imported inflation has reached 5.4 percent and is expected to rise further. CPI inflation could remain above 4.5 percent over the next three quarters, compounded by potential weather-related risks such as a Super El Niño.

Externally, FY26 saw record foreign institutional investor outflows of $16.6 billion, the highest since 1991, and India's balance of payments may remain in deficit in FY27. Given these challenges, SBI Research expects the RBI to adopt a cautious approach in policy and communication, focusing on stability while monitoring inflation, currency fluctuations, and geopolitical risks.

The MPC is therefore likely to hold rates steady, balancing domestic and global pressures in a complex macroeconomic environment.

AI CHIP BOOM

'AI to drive 49% semiconductor revenue growth by 2026'

NEW DELHI

A recent report by Goldman Sachs highlights how artificial intelligence is becoming a major force behind the rapid growth of the semiconductor industry.

According to their analysis, rising demand for AI technologies is expected to significantly boost global chip revenues over the next few years. This growth is largely tied to the increasing need for powerful computing systems that can train and run complex AI models.

As companies across industries adopt AI, they are investing heavily in data centers and specialized hardware. This includes high-performance processors, graphics

processing units, and advanced memory chips, all of which are essential for handling the massive data requirements of AI systems. The report suggests that this wave of investment could push semiconductor revenues sharply higher, potentially reaching unprecedented levels by the middle of the decade.

The momentum is being driven not only by tech giants but also by enterprises integrating AI into their operations. From automation to predictive analytics, AI applications are expanding rapidly, and each use case depends on robust semiconductor infrastructure. This has positioned chipmakers at the center of the AI revolution, making them key beneficiaries of the ongoing transformation.

However, the outlook is not without risks. The industry's growth is becoming increasingly dependent on continued AI investment, which could fluctuate based on economic conditions or changing business priorities. Despite these uncertainties, the overall trajectory remains strong, with AI expected to play a defining role in shaping the future of the semiconductor market.

Why India Has One of the World's Most Dangerous Secret Services?

In the murky world of global espionage, a handful of agencies command genuine fear and respect the CIA, Mossad, MI6, and Russia's FSB. Yet among these titans of intelligence, one agency consistently surprises analysts and rivals alike with its audacity, reach, and effectiveness: India's Research and Analysis Wing, or RAW. Born from the humiliation of military failure, shaped by decades of conflict on two fronts, and operating with a near-total absence of legal oversight, RAW has evolved into one of the most formidable and dangerous secret services in the world. Its story is inseparable from the story of modern India and it is far more chilling than Bollywood would have you believe.

ORIGINS: Built from Defeat

Every great intelligence agency has its founding trauma. For RAW, that moment came in the mountains of the Himalayas. Until 1968, India's Intelligence Bureau (IB) handled both internal and external intelligence. But after India's dismal performance in a 1962 border war with China, the need for a separate external intelligence agency was clear. The failure was stark: India had been caught completely unprepared by the Chinese advance, with no credible intelligence about the build-up of enemy forces.

Then came the 1965 war with Pakistan, which exposed further gaps in India's intelligence architecture. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, a formidable political mind who understood the value of a loyal and ruthless spy network, moved to fix the problem decisively. She picked Rameshwar Nath Kao, an officer in the foreign intelligence department of the Intelligence Bureau, to build India's first dedicated foreign intelligence agency from the ground up. Kao was the ideal architect: discreet, brilliant, and utterly devoted to India's national interests. He recruited broadly, drawing talent from police services, the military, and the civil services a group that would later be proudly called the "Kaoboys."

From the very beginning, RAW was designed to be different. Unlike other international contemporaries, RAW is a creation of executive order, which has allowed it to operate without answerability to Parliament. This was not an oversight. It was a deliberate architectural choice. An agency answerable only to the Prime Minister, unshackled from parliamentary scrutiny, free from the Right to Information Act, and without a written charter RAW was, from day one, designed to do things that governments could not officially acknowledge.

STRUCTURE: ANSWERABLE TO NO ONE BUT THE TOP

What makes RAW uniquely dangerous among the world's intelligence services is not just capability it is the near-absolute freedom from accountability. RAW is only answerable to the Prime Minister and the Joint Intelligence Committee. It is not liable to the Parliament of India on any issues, and the same provision keeps it out of reach of the Right to Information (RTI) Act. RAW was created by executive decision instead of by a statute or an act. As a result, it is not under parliamentary oversight. It is part of the Cabinet Secretariat, which is the government's top administrative coordinating body and is directly under the Prime Minister's office. Compare this with the CIA, which faces congressional oversight committees, mandatory budget disclosures, and Inspector General reviews. RAW operates in a legal grey zone that would be the envy of any intelligence chief in the world.

The Bangladesh Operation: Geopolitics Rewritten in the Shadows

If a single operation defines RAW's capacity for decisive, history-changing covert action, it is the 1971 Bangladesh War. What the world saw was a conventional military victory in which India defeated Pakistan and liberated East Pakistan, creating the sovereign nation of Bangladesh. What the world did not fully see was the years of meticulous intelligence work that made it possible.RAW reportedly provided intelligence and training to the East Pakistani guerrilla force called the Mukti Bahini against the Pakistani military and coordinated resistance operations inside East Pakistan. The agency also provided the Indian military with key information about Pakistan's battlefield plans, including Pakistan Air Force plans to launch air strikes on Indian Air Force bases.

Operation Sindoor: Intelligence Meets Modern Warfare

The most recent demonstration of RAW's lethal effectiveness came in 2025. Following the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which resulted in the deaths of 26 male tourists, India's intelligence apparatus mobilized with remarkable speed and precision.

In 2025, RAW reportedly provided intelligence that enabled the Indian military to launch missile strikes targeting militant groups in Pakistan under what was called Operation Sindoor. The operation was surgical, targeting nine specific terrorist infrastructure sites associated with groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. It represents perhaps the most significant and daring military strikes by India on Pakistani targets since the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971.

WHAT MAKES RAW TRULY DANGEROUS

Several factors combine to make RAW genuinely formidable among the world's intelligence agencies. First, strategic depth without accountability. Operating outside parliamentary oversight and beyond the reach of transparency laws, RAW can pursue decade-long strategic objectives without the political disruptions that plague Western agencies. There are no congressional hearings to weather, no inspector general reports to fear, no freedom of information requests to manage.Second, India's unique geopolitical position. India borders two nuclear-armed rivals with a history of active conflict. This has forced RAW to develop genuine all-spectrum capabilities — human intelligence, signals intelligence, technical intelligence, covert action, and political influence operations rather than specializing in any one area. Third, cultural versatility. India's extraordinary diversity its dozens of languages, religions, ethnic communities, and diaspora populations scattered across the globe gives RAW a natural deep-cover capability that few agencies can match. RAW is exceptional amongst major spy agencies in maintaining no permanent distinction between covert operatives who execute secret tasks and personnel who must liaise with foreign services or public bodies. This creates a fluid, adaptable organization that is harder to profile and counter than agencies with more rigid structures. Fourth, a willingness to act. The accumulation of evidence from Bangladesh, Sikkim, Kargil, and now Operation Sindoor points to an agency that, when directed, will act decisively — whether that means training a guerrilla army, engineering a political transition, or providing the intelligence backbone for precision strikes on a neighboring country. RAW is not merely a collection agency. Itis, when required, an instrument of force.

THE VERDICT

RAW is not the most resourced secret service in the world. It does not have the CIA's budget, Mossad's mythos, or the FSB's domestic reach. What it does have is a unique combination of strategic boldness, operational freedom, geopolitical necessity, and a proven track record of results that have shaped the fate of entire nations. From the jungles of East Pakistan to the streets of Vancouver, from the mountains of Sikkim to the depths of Pakistan's military heartland. RAW has demonstrated time and again that it is willing and able to operate where others fear to tread.In a world where intelligence agencies are increasingly subject to public scrutiny, legal constraints, and international norms, RAW remains something rarer and in some eyes more dangerous.

The Sikkim Gambit: A Kingdom Absorbed

Four years after Bangladesh, RAW turned its attention to the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim. Some of RAW's known operations include espionage during the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1971, assisting in the annexation of Sikkim in 1975, and reconnaissance of Pakistan's nuclear programme in the 1980s.

The Sikkim operation is a masterclass in covert political manipulation. Rather than a military invasion, RAW worked to destabilize the monarchy from within, amplifying local political grievances and democratic movements until the Chogyal Sikkim's king was left with no viable option but absorption into India. An entire sovereign state was folded into the Indian Union through a combination of political engineering, intelligence operations, and careful management of internal dissent. Not a shot was fired. No international headlines screamed of aggression. Sikkim simply became India's 22nd state.

GLOBAL REACH: Operating Beyond Borders

RAW's operational footprint today extends far beyond the Indian subcontinent. India's primary espionage agency and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) have long been at odds in a long-standing battle for influence. But the rivalry with Pakistan is only one dimension of RAW's global operations. The agency has built networks across the Middle East, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and even Western countries with large Indian diaspora populations.

In recent years, international controversy has engulfed RAW over alleged transnational operations against Sikh and Kashmiri separatists. In November, US authorities said an Indian government official had directed an unsuccessful plot to murder Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Sikh separatist and dual citizen of the US and Canada. The alleged plot, which was foiled only because the hired operative turned out to be an FBI informant, caused significant diplomatic turbulence between Washington and New Delhi.

In 2023, the government of Canada accused "agents of the government of India" of killing Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia — allegations that sent shockwaves through the Five Eyes intelligence community and created one of the most serious diplomatic crises between Canada and India in recent memory. India denied involvement, but the accusations pointed to an agency operating on a genuinely global scale and willing to take dramatic risks in pursuit of its objectives.

According to secret Pakistani intelligence assessments, RAW has been planning assassinations targeting Sikh and Kashmiri activists living in foreign countries, and is believed to be working in conjunction with local criminal and dissident networks to carry out assassinations and other attacks. Whether one accepts Pakistan's characterization or not, the pattern of intelligence reporting across multiple Western democracies suggests an agency with a long and unforgiving memory one that pursues threats regardless of international borders.

Some targets were 100 miles deep inside Pakistan, a demonstration that RAW's intelligence reach extended well into the Pakistani heartland. The precision of the strikes hitting the right buildings, avoiding civilian casualties, neutralizing specific command structures reflected years of patient intelligence cultivation inside Pakistan.

Oscar retires at 34 due to cardiac condition, ends decorated career

Brazilian midfielder calls time after health scare, leaves lasting global football legacy

LONDON

Oscar, the former Chelsea and Brazil midfielder, has announced his retirement from professional football at the age of 34 following health complications related to a cardiac condition.

Oscar, who was playing for São Paulo FC, made the decision after being hospitalised for five days in November. Medical evaluations confirmed that he was suffering from vasovagal syncope, a condition that causes sudden drops in heart rate and blood pressure, leading to fainting episodes.

Despite being under contract with São Paulo until 2027, the midfielder opted to terminate his deal early in the interest of his long-term health. In an emotional message shared on the club's social media, Oscar expressed regret at not being able to contribute more on the pitch.

"I wanted to do more for São Paulo and continue playing, as I still had the ability and age on my side. Unfortunately, this happened," he said, adding that he would now continue supporting the club as a fan.

Oscar's career spanned continents and brought him significant success at both club and international levels. During his time with Chelsea, he won two Premier League titles, playing a key role in the club's midfield with his creativity and technical ability.

He later moved to China, where he enjoyed a successful stint with Shanghai Port FC, winning three Chinese Super League titles and becoming one of the most prominent foreign players in the league.

On the international stage, Oscar represented Brazil national football team with distinction, winning the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2013. He also featured in the 2014 FIFA World Cup, scoring Brazil's lone goal in the team's historic semifinal defeat to Germany.

Returning to his boyhood club São Paulo in 2024 marked a full-circle moment in his career. Though his journey has ended earlier than expected, Oscar leaves behind a legacy of skill, professionalism, and achievements across global football.

Kerala Blasters face backlash after boycott

KOCHI

Supporters slam poor results and management, threaten empty stands in Kochi

A major rift has emerged between Kerala Blasters FC and their passionate fan base, with supporters' group Manjappada announcing a boycott of all remaining matches this season.

The call, shared widely across social media platforms, comes amid growing frustration over the club's poor performances in the ongoing Indian Super League campaign. Manjappada, regarded as one of Asia's largest football fan groups, accused the management of lacking vision, consistency, and connection with supporters.

In a strongly worded statement, the group said the team has "no clear motive or identity," pointing to repeated failures this season. The Blasters currently languish near the bottom of the standings, with just one point from six matches, intensifying concerns over their form.

The decline has been stark since the departure of former head coach Ivan Vukomanovic in 2024, under whom the club had enjoyed relative stability and success. Since then, multiple coaching changes — including stints by Mikael Stahre, T G Purushothaman, and David Catala — have failed to deliver results, with each tenure ending prematurely.

Manjappada also criticised what it described as poor player management, questionable signings, and a lack of long-term planning. The group alleged a growing disconnect between the club's leadership and its loyal supporters, which has further fuelled dissatisfaction.

The impact of the boycott could be significant. The Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, known for its electrifying atmosphere during Blasters matches, has already witnessed a dip in attendance this season. A sustained boycott may strip the venue of its iconic fan-driven energy, which has long been a defining feature of Kerala football culture.

Despite their protest, Manjappada had recently played an active role in promoting international fixtures, including India's Asian Cup qualifier, showcasing their continued commitment to the sport.

The Kerala Blasters management has yet to officially respond to the boycott call. As tensions escalate, the coming weeks could prove crucial in determining whether the club can rebuild trust with its supporters or face deeper alienation from its most devoted fan base.

Interim coach hopes to sign off with win amid uncertainty over future

Renedy Singh eyes strong finish as Bengaluru FC face FC Goa

MARGAO

Renedy Singh is determined to bow out on a high as he prepares to lead Bengaluru FC one final time in a crucial Indian Super League clash against FC Goa at the Fatorda Stadium.

In a challenging turn of events, Renedy has once again stepped in as interim head coach due to the delayed arrival of incoming Spanish manager Pep Munoz. Having been asked to step aside earlier, the former India midfielder has embraced the responsibility of guiding the team through a vital fixture that could impact their standing in the league.

Speaking ahead of the match, Renedy made it clear that sentiment will not alter his approach. "We attack as a team and defend as a team. I am not changing my philosophy just because it's my last match," he said, underlining his commitment to maintaining consistency in style and strategy.

Bengaluru FC's campaign has seen a mixed start, collecting just four points from their opening three matches. However, a strong resurgence — including two wins and a hard-fought draw against title contenders Mohun Bagan Super Giant — has brought last season's runners-up back into contention.

Their opponents, FC Goa, coached by Manolo Marquez, pose a formidable challenge. Known for their disciplined, possession-based approach, Goa have remained competitive despite drawing their last three games. With familiar names like Sandesh Jhinghan and Udanta Singh in their ranks, they will be eager to capitalise on home advantage.

The encounter promises to be an exciting one, given the recent history between the two sides, which has consistently produced goals and decisive outcomes. Both teams are closely placed in the standings, adding further significance to the clash.

For Renedy, the match carries personal and professional importance. While his future with the club remains uncertain, the 46-year-old is focused solely on delivering a positive result.

A victory would not only strengthen Bengaluru FC's position in the table but also provide a fitting farewell for a coach who has stepped up when the team needed him most.

IOC gender policy sparks debate ahead of LA Olympics 2028

BENGALURU

The International Olympic Committee's (IOC) latest policy on female category eligibility has reignited a global debate on the intersection of biology, fairness, and identity in sport ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Under the new guidelines, eligibility for women's events will be restricted to "biological females," determined through a one-time screening for the SRY gene — a marker associated with male sex development. The policy, to be implemented for the first time at the 2028 Games, effectively excludes transgender women and certain athletes with Differences in Sex Development (DSD) from competing in the female category.

The move has drawn mixed reactions. While some view it as a necessary step to ensure fairness, others argue it oversimplifies the complexities of human biology. Experts caution that sex determination cannot be reduced to a single genetic marker, pointing to the intricate interplay of chromosomes, hormones, and bodily responses.

The screening process itself is relatively non-invasive, involving saliva, cheek swabs, or blood samples. Athletes who test negative are cleared to compete. However, a positive result — indicating the presence of a Y chromosome — triggers further evaluation, subject to the athlete's consent.

Conditions such as Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) and 5-alpha reductase deficiency (5-ARD) complicate the issue further. While athletes with Complete AIS may still be eligible, those with Partial or Mild AIS, as well as 5-ARD, are barred due to perceived performance advantages linked to testosterone sensitivity.

The debate is not new to India. Sprinter Dutee Chand, who was previously barred due to hyperandrogenism, had successfully challenged similar regulations at the Court of Arbitration for Sport, only to find herself once again at the centre of a shifting policy landscape.

Other athletes, including Caster Semenya, have also faced scrutiny over DSD conditions, highlighting the human impact of such rules.

Medical experts stress the need for sensitivity, counselling, and ethical implementation, noting that genetic testing can have profound psychological and social consequences.

While the IOC maintains that the policy prioritises fairness under uncertainty, critics argue that it risks exclusion and stigma.

SANIA MIRZA URGES INDIAN TEAM TO PLAY WITH PRIDE AT BJK CUP

NEW DELHI

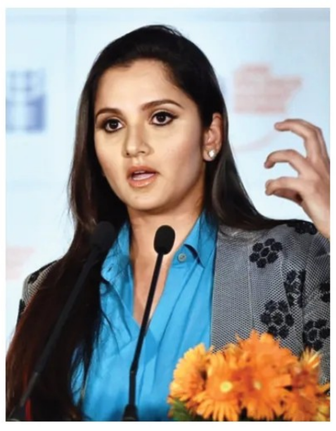
Sania Mirza has issued an inspiring message to India's women's tennis team ahead of the Billie Jean King Cup Asia/Oceania Group I event, calling on the players to represent the country with "greatest pride" and full commitment.

India will host the prestigious tournament at the DLTA Stadium in New Delhi from April 7 to 11, with six nations competing in a round-robin format for a place in the play-offs later this year. Often regarded as the World Cup of women's tennis, the competition offers a crucial pathway for teams aiming to break into the elite World Group.

In a video message shared ahead of the tournament, Mirza — a trailblazer in Indian tennis and a multiple Grand Slam winner — encouraged the squad to give their best on the court. "It's the greatest honour to represent our country. Give your 100 per cent and bring it home. We're all rooting for you," she said.

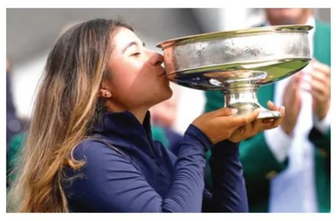
The Indian contingent features a mix of experience and emerging talent, including Ankita Raina, Sahaja Yamalapalli, Vaishnavi Adkar, Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, Rutuja Bhosale, and Vaidehee Chaudhari.

India heads into the tournament with confidence, having delivered strong performances in last year's Asia/Oceania Group I ties. The team secured notable 2-1 victories over multiple opponents, showcasing resilience and depth.



This year, the competition includes teams from Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, and Thailand. With only the top two teams advancing to the play-offs in November, the stakes are high for all participants. For India, the objective is clear — finish in the top two and move a step closer to re-entering the World Group for the third time. Playing at home is expected to provide a significant boost, with familiar conditions and crowd support working in their favour.

As the tournament approaches, Mirza's rallying call serves as both motivation and reminder of the honour of national representation, with the team aiming to translate belief into results on the court.



Maria Jose Marin triumphs as Talley falters at Augusta Amateur

AUGUSTA

Maria Jose Marin scripted history with a stunning victory at the Augusta National Women's Amateur, capitalising on a dramatic collapse by Asterisk Talley to secure a memorable four-shot win. Marin, a junior at the University of Arkansas, delivered a composed final round of 4-under 68 to finish at a tournament-record 14-under 202, becoming the first Colombian to win the prestigious event held at Augusta National.

The turning point came at the iconic 12th hole, where Talley, a 17-year-old Californian who had been in control for much of the tournament, suffered a nightmare sequence. Twice finding the water from the bunker, she carded a quadruple-bogey 7, undoing her lead in a matter of minutes. "I just reminded myself to stay patient because anything can happen here," Marin said, reflecting on the pivotal moment that shifted momentum decisively in her favour.

Southampton shock Arsenal, City cruise into FA Cup semifinals

LONDON

Southampton FC produced a stunning upset by knocking out Premier League leaders Arsenal FC from the FA Cup quarterfinals, while Manchester City powered into the last four with a dominant win over Liverpool FC.

Arsenal's hopes of securing multiple trophies this season suffered a major blow as they went down 2-1 at St. Mary's Stadium. Despite being favourites, manager Mikel Arteta's decision to rotate his squad proved costly against a determined Southampton side currently competing in the Championship.

Ross Stewart opened the scoring for the hosts in the 35th minute, before Arsenal responded through Viktor Gyokeres in the second half. However, Southampton continued to threaten on the counterattack, and Shea Charles struck late to seal a memorable victory in the 85th minute.

The defeat leaves Arsenal with only the Premier League and Champions League to chase this season. To compound their worries, defender Gabriel Magalhaes suffered a knee injury ahead of a crucial European fixture.

In contrast, Manchester City delivered a statement performance, thrashing Liverpool 4-0 at the Etihad Stadium. Erling Haaland was the star of the show, netting a rapid 18-minute hat trick — his 12th for the club — to dismantle Liverpool's defence.

City's relentless display also saw Antoine Semenyo contribute, as Pep Guardiola's side booked a place in the semifinals for a record eighth consecutive season. Liverpool's woes were compounded when Mohamed Salah missed a penalty, summing up a disappointing outing for the visitors.

Elsewhere, Chelsea FC cruised into the semifinals with a commanding 7-0 victory over lower-league Port Vale FC, showcasing their attacking depth.

The final semifinal spot will be decided when West Ham United take on Leeds United, after which the draw for the last four will be conducted.

With Arsenal out and City in imperious form, the FA Cup race now appears firmly tilted in favour of the reigning champions.

RCB black ticket buyers face strict crackdown

BENGALURU

Fans hoping to secure last-minute entry to Royal Challengers Bengaluru matches through unofficial channels could face serious trouble this season, as a new mobile ticketing system at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium tightens the net on black-market sales.

Authorities have introduced a largely digital ticketing model, with nearly 80% of tickets now issued as mobile or "m-tickets." The move, overseen by a State expert committee, is aimed at curbing rampant black-marketing that often sees fans paying exorbitant prices for entry to high-demand Indian Premier League matches.

The system is designed with multiple layers of security. Each buyer can purchase only two tickets at a time, which are delivered digitally. However, these tickets become valid only when a QR code is generated — a process that happens roughly five hours before the match. Access to the ticket is further protected by a passcode, making unauthorised sharing more difficult.

Digital m-ticketing with QR codes enables strict tracking and anti-fraud checks

Despite these safeguards, police warn that fraudsters may still attempt to exploit unsuspecting fans by selling the same digital ticket to multiple buyers. Since the ticket exists in electronic form, it can be duplicated and circulated easily. But the system is built to detect such misuse. Once a QR code is scanned at the stadium's turnstile gates, it is immediately invalidated. Any subsequent attempt to use the same code will fail, triggering alerts. Security personnel will then detain the individual attempting entry, leading to further scrutiny. Officials say the technology goes beyond simple validation. Each ticket leaves a digital trail, allowing authorities to trace when and where it was first used.

Combined with AI-enabled CCTV surveillance, this makes it possible to identify both the original user and the person involved in reselling the ticket. A senior police officer noted that while black-market sellers may try to profit by duping multiple buyers, the new system ensures accountability for all parties involved — including those who knowingly purchase such tickets. The message from authorities is clear: fans attempting to bypass official channels risk not just losing money, but also facing legal consequences under the new, tightly monitored system.

CSK's flawed auction strategy puts team on back foot in IPL 2026

CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings find themselves under early pressure in the Indian Premier League 2026 season, with consecutive defeats exposing glaring flaws in their auction strategy and overall squad composition.

After finishing at the bottom last year, CSK entered the season with renewed intent and several changes. However, results on the field have shown little improvement.

Their latest loss came against Punjab Kings, where despite posting a formidable 209, the Super Kings failed to defend the total convincingly. Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad now faces the immediate challenge of lifting the team's energy levels, which appeared lacking during the opposition's chase. More concerning, however, is the bowling unit's inability to contain strong batting lineups — a weakness that has quickly become CSK's biggest liability.

Poor squad balance and weak bowling depth leave Chennai struggling early.

The absence of Nathan Ellis has significantly disrupted the team's pace attack. His unavailability has left a void that the current squad has struggled to fill.

The decision to bring in Spencer Johnson as a replacement, despite him being unavailable for several weeks and lacking recent match practice, has raised eyebrows. Critics point out that CSK missed opportunities at the auction by not securing proven backup pacers such as Lungi Ngidi or Jacob Duffy, both of whom were available at base prices but picked up by rival franchises. Additionally, the absence of an overseas finisher to support players like Dewald Brevis has further weakened the squad balance.

The situation was highlighted starkly when CSK fielded only two overseas players in their last match, underlining the lack of depth and flexibility in team selection. Head coach Stephen Fleming defended the franchise's auction decisions, insisting that the management had carefully evaluated options.

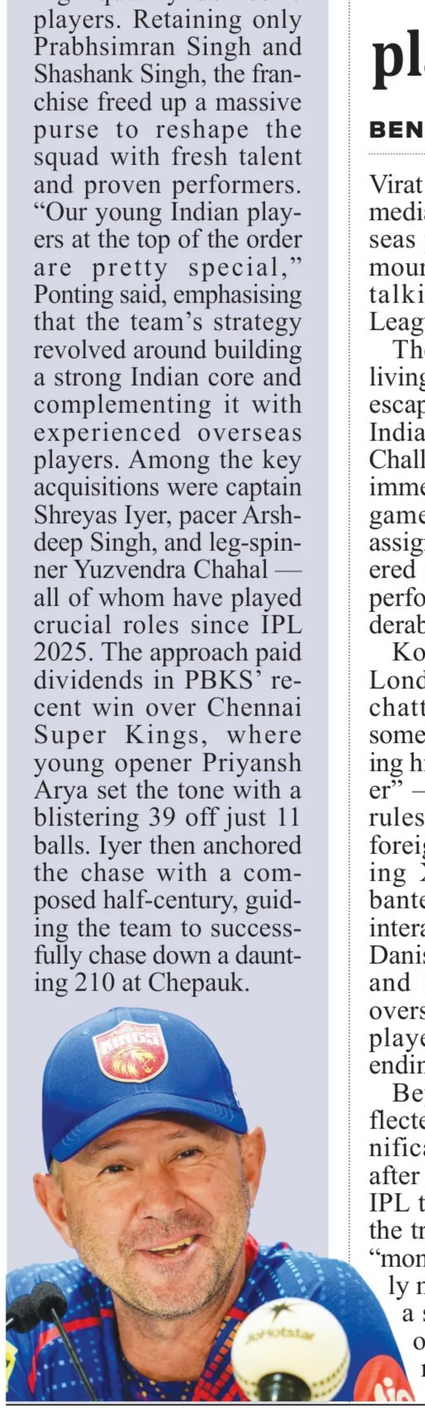
He acknowledged, however, that execution on the field needs urgent improvement, particularly from the bowling unit in batting-friendly conditions. With the tournament still in its early stages, CSK have time to recover. But unless their bowling attack finds rhythm and balance soon, the five-time champions risk another disappointing campaign.

Young Indian core driving PBKS revival, says Ponting

CHENNAI

Punjab Kings head coach Ricky Ponting has credited the franchise's resurgence to its young Indian batting core, describing them as "special" talents who form the backbone of the team's long-term vision in the Indian Premier League 2026 season.

Ponting revealed that PBKS entered the previous auction with a clear plan to rebuild from scratch, focusing on high-quality domestic players. Retaining only Prabhsimran Singh and Shashank Singh, the franchise freed up a massive purse to reshape the squad with fresh talent and proven performers. "Our young Indian players at the top of the order are pretty special," Ponting said, emphasising that the team's strategy revolved around building a strong Indian core and complementing it with experienced overseas players. Among the key acquisitions were captain Shreyas Iyer, pacer Arshdeep Singh, and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal — all of whom have played crucial roles since IPL 2025. The approach paid dividends in PBKS' recent win over Chennai Super Kings, where young opener Priyansh Arya set the tone with a blistering 39 off just 11 balls. Iyer then anchored the chase with a composed half-century, guiding the team to successfully chase down a daunting 210 at Chepauk.



Leander Paes to spearhead India's Olympic 2036 bid efforts

KOLKATA

Leander Paes has been entrusted with a key role in advancing India's bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games, marking a significant step in his transition from a celebrated sporting career to public life.

The seven-time Olympian revealed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assigned him responsibilities related to youth development and sports, with a focus on strengthening India's case to host the global sporting spectacle. Paes said he would also contribute to preparations for the 2030 Commonwealth Games proposed in Ahmedabad.

Calling the Olympic bid a transformative opportunity, Paes emphasised that hosting the Games could reshape India's sporting ecosystem and elevate its global stature. He pointed out that nations dominating the Olympic medal tally — such as the United States, China, Japan, Australia, and Great Britain — are also among the world's leading economies, underlining the link between sporting excellence and national development.

Paes stressed that India must invest heavily in grassroots talent and infrastructure to emulate such success. "In sports and sports education lies the ability to build a superpower," he said, highlighting the importance of nurturing young athletes to achieve long-term goals.

Focusing on his home state, Paes expressed concern over the lack of adequate sporting infrastructure in West Bengal. Despite iconic venues like Eden Gardens and Salt Lake Stadium, he noted that facilities for sports beyond cricket and football remain limited.

VIRAT KOHLI laughs off 'overseas player' jibes, shines in IPL 2026 opener

BENGALURU

Virat Kohli has brushed aside social media trolls labelling him an "overseas player", responding with humour while letting his bat do the talking in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season opener.

The 37-year-old, who has been living in England with his family to escape constant public attention in India, returned to action for Royal Challengers Bengaluru and made an immediate impact. Despite limited game time since India's last ODI assignment in January, Kohli delivered a composed and commanding performance against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Kohli's relocation to London had sparked chatter online, with some fans jokingly calling him an "overseas player" — a reference to IPL rules allowing only four foreign players in a playing XI. Addressing the banter in a light-hearted interaction with presenter Danish Sait, Kohli smiled and said, "I am not an overseas player. Am I an overseas player?" — drawing laughs and ending the debate with ease.

Beyond the humour, Kohli reflected on his journey and the significance of success, particularly after guiding RCB to their maiden IPL title last season. He described the triumph as a moment when the "monkey off the back" feeling finally made sense, bringing relief and a sense of fulfilment after years of effort. "Victory is the accumulation of hard work and sacrifices. It reassures you that your commitment has meaning," Kohli said, emphasising how success fuels further motivation while also acknowledging that setbacks can be disheartening for many athletes. On the field, Kohli showed no signs of slowing down. Chasing a daunting 202 at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, he scored a fluent 69 off 38 deliveries, including five fours and five sixes. His innings powered RCB to the fastest 200-plus chase in IPL history, completed in just 15.4 overs.

Star batter dismisses criticism, leads RCB with match-winning knock in season opener

During the knock, Kohli also surpassed Shoaib Malik to become the Asian player with the most T20 runs and achieved another milestone by crossing 4,000 IPL runs while chasing — reaffirming his enduring class and dominance.

PAYAL NAG'S incredible rise: From tragedy to para-archery gold

BHUBANESWAR

In a story of grit, resilience, and unbreakable spirit, Payal Nag has emerged as a new beacon of inspiration in Indian para-sports, overcoming unimaginable odds to clinch gold on the international stage. Born to migrant labourers in Odisha's Bolangir district, Payal's life took a devastating turn in 2015 when, at just eight years old, she stepped on a live electric wire in Raipur. The accident led to the amputation of both her hands and legs, a tragedy that could have ended her dreams before they began. Yet, with support from the local administration and her family, Payal slowly rebuilt her life.

Years later, she has scripted history as the world's first quadruple amputee archer, recently defeating her idol Sheetal Devi to win gold in the women's compound final at the World Archery Para Series in Bangkok. Her narrow 139-136 victory was not just a sporting triumph but a symbolic moment of surpassing inspiration with achievement. Interestingly, Payal's journey into archery began through social media. Coach Kuldeep Vedwan spotted her potential online in 2023 and made determined efforts to bring her to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Archery Academy in Katra, Jammu & Kashmir — the same training ground that shaped Sheetal Devi. Initially facing resistance, Vedwan persisted, eventually securing support from district authorities to bring Payal to the academy.

Glenn Phillips finds comfort and confidence with Gujarat Titans

CHENNAI

Glenn Phillips says he has found a sense of belonging with Gujarat Titans, crediting the franchise's environment for helping him settle and perform in the ongoing Indian Premier League 2026 season. The New Zealand all-rounder, currently in his second year with the Titans, described the team atmosphere as being similar to that of the New Zealand national cricket team, which he believes has been key to his comfort and adaptability during an extended stay in the subcontinent.

Phillips has spent several months in India and nearby regions, featuring in bilateral series, ICC tournaments, and now the IPL. He said the variety of formats and conditions has kept the game engaging while allowing him to grow as a player. "It's great to have a change of scene and different formats. That keeps things interesting," Phillips said, adding that the Titans' setup has made his transition seamless. "It's probably the closest franchise environment I've experienced to the Black Caps."

Having joined the Titans in 2025, Phillips' previous campaign was cut short due to injury. This season, the 29-year-old is determined to make a stronger impact. Playing a flexible middle-order role, he emphasised the importance of adapting to match situations rather than focusing solely on personal milestones. Phillips credited head coach Ashish Nehra and the support staff for providing clarity and confidence. "They make sure you feel comfortable in your game and give you everything you need to prepare," he said, noting that his role varies depending on conditions — from aggressive finishing to stabilising innings on tougher pitches.

Beyond on-field responsibilities, Phillips highlighted the off-field camaraderie and family-oriented culture within the franchise as crucial factors.

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